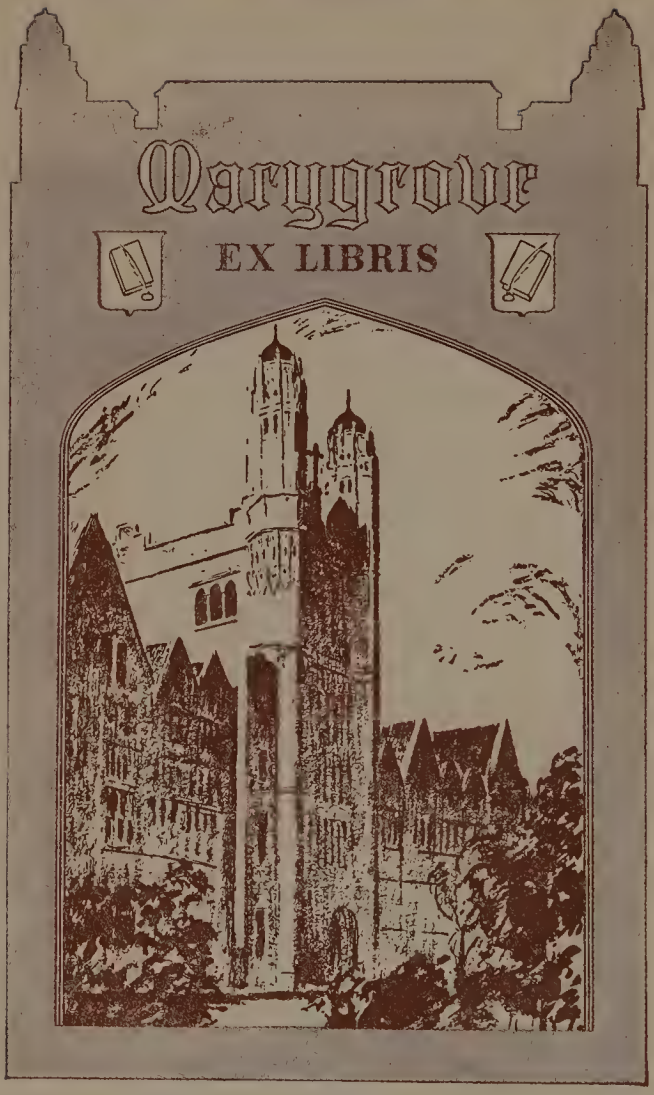

Marygrove
EX LIBRIS

THE LIFE OF EMILIE DE VIALAR

Imprimatur

✠ F. PERROY,

Bishop of Medea,

Vicar Apostolic Lower Burma.

RANGOON

Feast of SS. Peter and Paul 1928.

The profits on the sale of this book are to be devoted to the cause of Beatification now under consideration in Rome.

MOTHER EMILIE DE VIALAR

THE LIFE OF EMILIE DE VIALAR

Foundress of The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition
(1797-1856)

By
A Member of the Congregation

TAKEN FROM HISTORIC RECORDS
AND OTHER AUTHENTIC SOURCES

"To them that love God
All things
Work together unto good"

MOTTO OF THE CONGREGATION
"Devotedness even unto death"

LONDON
SANDS & CO.
15 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.2
1929

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

Gift

DEDICATION

GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED
TO
REVEREND MOTHER CELINA,
WHO,
FOR A PERIOD EXTENDING OVER
NINE AND TWENTY YEARS,
DIRECTED THE CONGREGATION
AS GENERAL SUPERIOR
AND WHO,
IN THE MIDST OF GREAT AND VARIED TRIALS,
REFLECTED THE SPIRIT OF
THE FOUNDRESS
BY HER PATIENCE, COURAGE, CONFIDENCE,
IN GOD
AND UNWAVERING FIDELITY
TO DUTY.

DECLARATION

In conformity with the decree of Pope Urban VIII we hereby declare that only a mere human authority is attributed to the appellations contained in this biography. Likewise in regard to facts and events herein recorded we declare that there is no intention of forestalling the judgment or decisions of the Sovereign Pontiff, to whom we submit wholeheartedly and unreservedly.

APPROBATION

Dear Sister X——,

It afforded me great pleasure to read your manuscript copy of the Life of Mother Emilie de Vialar. Her biography has already been published in French and Italian, but although the Congregation has been in existence for well nigh a hundred years and notwithstanding the fact that many Convents of the Sisterhood are established in the British Colonies, no record of her work has ever been published in book form in the English language. That long felt need has now been supplied.

We are happy to note that this new biography is both interesting and edifying. It will prove beneficial to the faithful who appreciate the Christian virtues of humility, charity, self-sacrifice and fortitude—virtues practised to a heroic degree by the Servant of God, Mother Emilie de Vialar. If her life story is a grand source of inspiration to all, it is so in a special manner to her spiritual children—the members of the Congregation in which her work is carried on. Our mission

fields being now in great need of generous self-sacrificing labourers, we confidently hope that this biography will prove helpful in the case of those attracted towards Girlhood's Highest Ideal—The Religious State.

Trusting that these wishes may be realised, we most cordially bless you and your work.

F. PERROY,
Bishop of Medea.

Rangoon,
Feast of SS. Peter and Paul,
1928.

St. Mary's,
Victoria Square,
Perth,
Western Australia.

April 19*th*, 1928.

It is with feelings of mingled delight and gratitude that we have heard of the probability of the Saintly Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition being canonised.

Although our new West Australian land was never sanctified by her presence or her labours, it has been blessed by the virtues and the noble educational work of her spiritual daughters, the good Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, for over seventy years. They have been conducting our Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools in large and important centres, such as Fremantle, Albany and Northam, with zeal and success that could hardly be surpassed. Generations of our Catholic youth have been most carefully

instructed in the faith by these zealous, self-denying and saintly religious who have been moulded in that spirit of generosity, sacrifice, humility and charity infused into the order by its Holy Foundress, Mother Emilie de Vialar. Most humbly and ardently then we add our petition to the many others already received that the Holy Foundress may be canonised.

We feel sure that we will be enriched by her pleadings before God's Throne.

PATRICK J. CLUNE, C.SS.R.,
Archbishop of Perth,
West Australia.

CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
I	Early Years. . . .	15
II	Vocation	34
III	Widening Horizons . .	50
IV	Shadow of the Cross . .	61
V	The Shadow Deepens . .	75
VI	The Field Afar . . .	90
VII	Darkness and Light . .	106
VIII	The Mother House . .	125
IX	Laudate	141
X	The Dawn of Eternity .	163
XI	The Foundress . . .	176
XII	The Missions . . .	187
XIII	Echoes of the Past . .	222
XIV	Capelette	255

Appendix—

(*a*) "Thoughts and Maxims of Mother Emilie" . . 273

(*b*) "Graces and Favours Attributed to Her Intercession" 278

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Mother Emilie de Vialar ...	*Frontispiece*
Emilie at the Age of Two with Her Cousin and Brother Augustine	21
Convent Garden, Moulmein ...	102
Convents at Jaffa and Jerusalem ...	122
Sisters of Northam Convent, Australia	150
St. Joseph's Convent, Bassein ...	187
The Dinner Hour and Pupils Gardening, Bassein	206
Convents at Maymyo and Rangoon	208
His Grace Most Revd. P. J. Clune, C.S.S.R., D.D.	211
Tea Party of 1st Communicants and Mission Pupils, Australia	214
Convent of St. Joseph, Manchester	217
The Mother House, Capelette, Marseilles	255
Revd. Mother Celina, Superior General	259

THE LIFE OF EMILIE DE VIALAR

CHAPTER I

"The Catholic Church is Jesus Christ, still living in the world, teaching, suffering, working miracles and doing all that He did in His Mortal life. In all ages since His Coming we have His faithful followers endeavouring to live His Life over again; so that whether we consider His Prayer or His Poverty, His Care of the sick or His Office of Teacher, we find His Spirit reflected and His Mission continued by His servants and co-labourers."

"Looking back through the vista of the years, ever since the captivating charms of His Infancy were revealed to the world and the glorious canticle of Mary proclaimed the sweet triumph of sanctified humility, what vast numbers of her handmaids have been raised, not only to the knowledge of her Divine Son, but to a participation in the work of extending His Kingdom!"

Amongst these faithful followers of Christ,

Emilie de Vialar, Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of The Apparition, takes so prominent a place that she is likened to the great St. Teresa of Avila. The points of resemblance have been noted in personal characteristics, in the origin and manifestations of the call to the religious life, in brilliancy of intellect, voluntary choice of hardships, in a word, in wholehearted devotedness to the interests of Jesus.

EARLY YEARS

I love them that love Me : and they that in the early morning watch for Me shall find Me.—*Prov.* viii, 17.

Ann Marguerite Emilie de Vialar was born on the 12th September, 1797, at Gaillac. This little town is situated at no great distance from that well-known beauty spot in the Pyrenees, the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes. In its immediate neighbourhood there is much to charm the eye, the outstanding features being just those aspects of Nature which made special appeal to the Little Flower of Jesus, who tells us that as long as she could remember she loved far-stretching plains and stately trees.

Prior to the ravages and disasters of the Revolution there were several monasteries

and religious houses in Gaillac. It is recorded that a Benedictine abbey established there as early as the year 950 exercised its beneficial influence, not only in the immediate neighbourhood, but throughout the entire country. At the present day the Church of St. Michael is the most noteworthy structure in the little town.

As for the parents of Emilie, they belonged to families of great distinction. Her father, the Baron de Vialar, was endowed with many excellent gifts of mind and person. Her maternal grandfather, the Baron de Portal, was of Spanish origin. Besides bearing the baronial dignity he was an eminent scientist, and as court physician to Louis XVIII and Charles X, had the privilege of rendering service to Pope Pius VI during the sojourn of His Holiness in the French capital.

In the days of her youth Emilie was interested, and often deeply stirred, by events connected with the revolutionary movement. Tales of voluntary exile, examples of self-sacrifice and heroism, so affected her at that period that her biographer does not hesitate to ascribe to these sources something of the courage, ardour and steadfastness of purpose which she herself displayed in after life. If this opinion be well founded, it is but another

proof that "all things work together unto good" in souls wherein the gift of God's love is appreciated beyond all else.

Now, if we admit that the stirring times in which Emilie passed the years of her childhood really had something to do with the moulding of her character, we must likewise take into account another factor which is very powerful, i.e., home influence. For the first seven years of her childhood Emilie enjoyed the love and care of a devoted mother.

Until additional household duties prevented the fulfilment of the pleasant task Madame de Vialar was the teacher of her little girl. Only at the age of seven was Emilie sent to the town school. This step was taken with great reluctance, for the mistress of this establishment was totally unfit for the teaching of Christian doctrine. Madame de Vialar, however, was most careful in supervising the daily lessons and homework, and especially did she never fail to instruct her child in the love and knowledge of God and in the ways of piety and virtue. That the little Emilie proved an apt pupil we shall see for ourselves, when we come to the period of her life in which those early lessons are to be put into practice.

Emilie had three brothers younger than herself—Augustin, Alfred and Maximen. Alfred lived only a few days. Augustin and Maximen were educated in Paris, under the care of their grandfather, the Baron de Portal. They were distinguished during their school career and in after life in their different professions.

Augustin occupied for some time a post of honour under the government, but this, as an ardent royalist, he felt compelled to resign, whereupon he retired to Languedoc, and eventually made his home in Algeria. It was jokingly remarked that "The eldest son of the Baron de Vialar traverses the earth and the seas. He is going to colonize Algeria, fertilize the desert, and in course of time become Emperor of the Bedouins." As a matter of fact, Augustin did become a leading figure in the African colony, but, what is more to our purpose, he proved a generous friend and supporter of his sister, Emilie, in the great work to which her life was devoted.

It must always be borne in mind that the lives of God's true servants and co-labourers are lives of human beings whose story is as attractive in its human appeal as it is edifying and encouraging by way of example. During the six years that Emilie attended

school in her native town she was remarkable for sweetness of disposition and kindly ways. Her music lessons, which, under other circumstances, might have proved a source of pleasure and enjoyment, were a source of great trial to her, owing to the ambition, or shall we say, the envy and jealousy of her teacher. Emilie's friend and companion, Mademoiselle de Cossigny, was remarkable for musical talent, and, under the tuition of her father, a musical artiste, she made rapid progress. Now, Emilie's teacher was determined to make her attain the same distinction, though it was utterly beyond her ability. To use Emilie's own words to this friend, "Never shall I be able to play as you do." But there were no complaints. Graciously and sweetly did the little pupil submit to the periods of practice enforced on her by her mistress. For three, and often four hours each day the task was performed, though well aware that the expected distinction could never, never be attained.

In other branches of study Emilie was highly gifted, but though she excelled her companions, never did she put on airs, or show her superiority; on the contrary, she was ever ready to follow their lead in regard to the choice of games, etc.

EMILIE AT THE AGE OF TWO WITH HER COUSIN AND BROTHER AUGUSTINE

Numerous other instances are recorded of this period, special mention being made of voluntary acts of mortification. In addition to these we have an account of her soul-experiences written by Emilie herself at the request of her confessor. These pages provide many precious gems of thought. The same source furnishes convincing proofs of the fact that she was favoured with choice graces in connection with the sanctification of her soul and the work that she was to establish in the Church. Emilie did not receive the Sacrament of Confirmation until she reached the age of ten. This event was ever a memorable one, as she seemed to have received very abundantly of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, with a special outpouring of the three graces needful for her in the future—Wisdom, Fortitude and Piety. "Life is truly bright when it proceedeth towards a higher, greater life above. Childhood's love is sweetest when it leadeth to a more divine and perfect love."

Under the affectionate care of her devoted mother Emilie tasted all the joys of a happy home for the three years during which she frequented the local school at Gaillac. Happy memories of this period were engraven on her mind and heart and cherished all the

more fondly because experiences of a later date formed a sad and painful contrast. After this term it was decided to send her to Paris, that she might have the best advantages possible in the way of education. Madame de Vialar was in failing health, and, with the hope of benefiting by the medical skill of her father, she accompanied Emilie to the capital. Hardly had the party reached their destination, when her condition gave cause for the gravest fears. Notwithstanding all that devoted care could devise to effect a recovery, the good lady passed away just six weeks after her arrival. She herself asked for the last Sacraments and prepared for the passage into eternity in a truly edifying manner. The thought of God and her duties to Him helped her to bear the deep anguish caused by the sight of the three little children around her death-bed. The loss was deeply felt by all; but to the delicate and sensitive nature of Emilie the shock was very great indeed. So keenly did she feel the pain of that sad separation that it remained as a wistful remembrance during her whole lifetime.

To her dearly loved sister, Madame de Lamourie, she confided the care of her three children, and in compliance with her dying wishes Emilie was placed under the care of

the religious of Notre Dame. Here Emilie received her first Communion, edifying all around her by her fervour, piety and recollection. On this occasion, too, she seemed to have been favoured by Our Blessed Lord in a manner similar to that of the Little Flower of Liseux in our own days. Commenting on this great event in after life, Emilie expressed herself thus: "It was from that time I began to love God really and truly. I was also impelled, by the graces received, to rid myself of a bad habit of which I then became conscious, viz.: untruthfulness through fear of those in authority over me. Since then I have hated nothing so much as falsehood."

Two years after this date of precious graces Emilie was taken out of this convent by her father, ostensibly by reason of his loneliness. Are we now going to get a glimpse of a bright and happy home in which we behold the touching sight of a father trying to compensate for the sweetness of a mother's love, which in this case is so sorely and so sadly missed? This is a picture of "What might have been." On the contrary, the poor little motherless girl had to submit to the rule of a tyrannical housekeeper, Tinon by name, who not only persecuted her continually, but turned her father against her. There is no

possibility of excusing Tinon—without exaggeration or injustice, well might she be dubbed, Tinon the tyrant. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that Almighty God frequently permits His best friends to be treated thus.

It is related of St. Vincent de Paul that, on a certain occasion, a lady entrusted him with the mission of obtaining from the king an important post for her son. The conduct of the young man being anything but good, St. Vincent could not find it in his conscience to intercede in his behalf; when the lady learned that he had *not* presented her request, she overwhelmed him with abuse and even went so far as to strike him. The Saint received her treatment with unalterable gentleness and retired. On rejoining two of his colleagues who were witnesses of the scene he said, very simply: "How that mother loves her child!" Here we see the ingenuity of Christian charity. In the case of Emilie de Vialar we are given a grand example of patience and submission under a long period of trials permitted by God. Let us study the lesson in the biography already referred to: "I suffered greatly on account of the mischief made by a person of our household between my father and myself. For twenty years did this trial last. The per-

secution commenced on my return from the boarding school and continued till a short while previous to the time the Congregation was founded. During these weary years our Blessed Lord sustained me with a special grace that enabled me to support with patience and resignation these continual sufferings.

My only consolation was the thought that it was God's will that I should suffer in this way. At times Our Blessed Lord deigned to encourage me in these words: "My child, bear up this for My Sake," and very frequently I heard His Voice in the interior of my soul asking the question, "Lovest thou Me?"

Here we are reminded of the trials and experiences of St. Teresa, of whom it is said that the thought of God conferred upon her an elevation of heart and a strength of will before which the trials of her life, great as they were, gave way. The mistrust, calumny, abandonment and persecution she had to endure might have broken down a strong man. But woman as she was, she passed through it all and came out more than conqueror. So was it with Emilie. She writes, "God inspired me about this time to bear patiently for His Sake the trials that are sometimes inflicted on us by those in authority

over us." This, as we shall see, was a sort of object lesson or practical training in preparation for what she had to endure later on. In these early years the future Foundress had already acquired the spirit of humility, devotedness and self-abnegation which constitute the soul of the religious life.

To make her trials harder to bear, the pernicious spirit of Jansenism then held sway amongst the clergy; consequently, Emilie was deprived, not only of the guidance and advice of a good spiritual director, but also of the reception of the Sacraments. Just when frequent Communion was so much needed as a source of help and consolation, she was deprived of It. The result was that she fell into a state of indifference in the service of God and this lasted for three whole years. However, God watched over her and even deigned to enlighten her with extraordinary graces. She herself relates: "One day when alone in my room, all of a sudden I felt myself dazzled by a brilliant light that surrounded me. It appeared to come from the heavens whither my eyes were spontaneously directed and immediately I fell on my knees. This signal favour did not deprive me entirely of the use of my faculties, but it made me form the resolution of devot-

ing myself entirely to God. However, it still took me some time to rid myself of indifference and tepidity.

"There was a mission given in our town. I followed the exercises, but in a state of uneasiness and fear of the judgements of God. I resolved to consult one of the Fathers as to the advisability of making a general confession. He directed me to do so. Our Blessed Lord then enlightened me in a special manner with regard to my faults, and I was so impressed with the consideration of the greatness of our offences against God, in consequence of our sins, that I was overwhelmed with sorrow. The result of these graces and impressions was an utter detestation of sin, an ardent love of God with such a firmness of purpose that it seemed to me that I could endure any kind of tyranny, rather than commit a deliberate offence against Him in future.

"Besides, I became animated with so ardent a zeal that I completely overcame what had hitherto been my greatest difficulty, that is, human respect in regard to holiness of life. I now felt that God Himself became my Director, and, although I went to confession regularly every week, it never occurred to me to mention the intimate communications

with which I was favoured by Almighty God. All that He required of me was revealed in a most clear and convincing manner."

Following the action of grace in her soul, we find that, from the practice of corporal mortifications, she was led to the exercise of self-immolation, to a spirit of self-sacrifice which induced her to act at all times in the way that was most pleasing to God. But, while avoiding anything that savoured of luxury in dress or ornament, there was no trace of singularity in her deportment, either at home or in society.

Still favoured with special enlightenment and divine grace, Emilie was encouraged to a life of closer union with God by a direct but secret appeal, in the words: "Continue a life of union with Me, I shall recall you, if you wander away." In her autobiography, we find many other interesting details of this period. "I was," she writes, "attracted to a life of prayer, and, several times a day, I retired to my room to commune with God. I took special care to assist at Holy Mass every day. I also seized the occasions when I could pay a visit to the Church in the afternoon, but this unknown to my father, who did not like this 'extra devotion.'

"During one of these visits to the Blessed

Sacrament, when all alone in the Church, between three and four in the evening, I was engaged in meditative prayer, when, all on a sudden, Jesus appeared to me on the Altar. The apparition was as clear and distinct as that of a person placed before me. I was particularly struck with the marks of His Five Wounds and more especially with that of the Right Hand. His Arms were extended in the form of a Cross. My eyes were fixed on these emblems of mercy from which drops of blood appeared to flow. The Wound on the Sacred Side was also especially noticeable."

By way of appreciation of this favour, Emilie made a promise to recite daily for the rest of her life, five Paternosters, Aves, and Glorias in honour of the Five Wounds; furthermore, in token of gratitude and in order to preserve the constant remembrance of this special favour, the Foundress, later on, made it a rule in her Congregation, that this devotion should be adopted in each House. And thus it is that these Sacred Wounds are honoured in the manner prescribed by Mother Emilie, in her convents, in France, in Italy, in Malta, in Tunis and other parts of the Near East, in far distant Burma and in the land of the Southern Cross.

Special graces were bestowed upon her so

frequently that Emilie was sensible of supernatural light and guidance in almost all her actions. The following experiences are recorded as examples of this familiar intercourse.

"On the afternoon of a certain day, I was inspired to go to Confession; I resisted, thinking that I could not see the priest, for the Church was usually closed at that hour of the day. Again I felt impelled to go and, at the same time, I was assured that the priest would be there. I went, found the Church open, and, to my great surprise, my Confessor actually entered. On another occasion I was about to leave the Church, before finishing the prayers that I usually said, in order to accompany my companions on a visit to the Mission Cross that was outside the town. Contrary to my desire to leave, I was inspired to remain and continue my prayers. I obeyed this inspiration and a short time afterwards I heard a voice saying distinctly, 'At present you may go with your friends.'

"Two persons were engaged in a law-suit—One of them came expressly to ask my prayers for success. Some time after when about to pray for this intention I heard a voice which said, 'And then, the other?'

I stopped, feeling sure that God did not want me to plead in behalf of this person. A few days afterwards I was informed that the other party had actually gained the case."

Continuing the accounts of God's dealings with her soul she states that for the space of three years after her revival of fervour, she was favoured with an ardent desire for Holy Communion and with very great peace and tranquillity; but owing to a slight fault against Charity, she was deprived of sensible consolations for the space of fifteen days—a privation which she felt very keenly indeed.

At the age of eighteen, being uncertain as to the manner of service that would be required of her in the future, she read spiritual books on the subject of religious vocations and prayed for special enlightenment. God had deigned to hear her prayer and favoured her with a heavenly inspiration to the effect that in two years time she would know her vocation. Being thus assured, her only desire was to do God's Holy Will in all the details of her life.

In the following account of her attraction towards the foreign missions we have another proof of special graces. "Besides an eager desire for the practice of charity in regard to the poor and the needy, I was deeply

interested in missionary effort in the Fields Afar. On the occasions of my visits to the city of Paris, the Church of the Society of the Foreign Missions always attracted me in a special manner. In fact, at this time I made a solemn promise to invoke the aid of St. Francis Xavier, by daily reciting some special prayers in his honour.

"I had entire confidence in Almighty God, and so great was my reliance on His divine power and guidance, that I even refrained from calculating the time when my vocation would be made known to me. But the days of trial were now approaching. In a period of doubt and darkness, I felt, for the first time, the necessity of speaking to my confessor about the great graces with which God had favoured me. On mentioning the subject I was stopped abruptly; then, owing to my timidity and to the thought that it would be impossible to convince this priest of matters of which I felt assured, I said not a word; but, firmly believing it to be the will of God, I left this confessor."

During that time of trial Emilie was sustained by the thought of her vocation, and Almighty God guided her to an enlightened director, Father Mercier. Henceforth everything was made clear to her in regard to the

affairs of her soul. At confession she could humble herself for her faults, without doubting the action of divine grace. Her spiritual life was raised to a higher plane, and, as regards the sufferings she was called on to endure, we have a striking instance of the sublime truth, that suffering will pass, but the fruit of suffering, borne as a Christian should bear it, will last for ever.

CHAPTER II

VOCATION

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely—think on these things, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."—*St. Paul.*

When Almighty God inspires certain souls to do great things for His Glory we find that a special Providence guides them along their destined way. "This is he who is sent to be your guide," were the consoling words addressed to St. Margaret Mary in her convent in Paray-le-Monial, at the moment when she was in special need of help in carrying out the commands of our Blessed Lord.

Emilie de Vialar, in sore need of spiritual direction, was led to Father Mercier, the priest who was evidently destined by God to aid and instruct her in regard to her vocation. Many prominent personages of this period have left on record most enthusiastic appreciations of the talents and virtues of this great priest. For the purpose of these memoirs it suffices to say that Father Mercier

was a man of God, that he showed his zeal in the sacred ministry chiefly in regard to the poor and the suffering, in the catechetical instruction of children, especially first Communicants, and, when he noticed any sign of a vocation, he made every effort towards its development. He was a fit spiritual guide for Emilie de Vialar. Realizing on the occasion of their first meeting, that he had to deal with a highly gifted soul, Father Mercier allowed Emilie the privilege of daily Communion. Our Blessed Lord Himself assures us that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and, at this particular period, Emilie had great need of this celestial nourishment.

We shall now take a brief glance at her apostolic work, for such it may be called, since in all her actions the predominant motive was that of spreading around her the good odour of Christ. To help and comfort the poor was her greatest ambition, and, influenced by her example, many of her friends joined in her good works. The poor children of their own town were the first objects of their devotedness. Needless to add that religious instructions and the care of the souls of these little ones were ever first in the thoughts of these heroines of charity.

Under the guidance and direction of Father

Mercier, Emilie extended her charitable care to all the needy ones of the parish. In regard to the sick and the suffering she was ever a ministering angel of sweetness and sympathy. From the record of her interior life we learn that her efforts were visibly blessed by Almighty God, for she had the happiness of bringing about the conversion of many a poor sinner. The resources at her disposal not being always equal to the ardour of her charity, very frequently she begged help from friends and relatives. Again, many a time was she seen carrying corn from her father's granaries for distribution amongst the poor. So great was her "passion for almsgiving" that, in dragging a sack of corn that was too heavy for her, she sustained an injury that caused her to suffer for the remainder of her life; she suffered, however, in secret; it was but a short time before her death that this incident became known.

Her father appreciated neither the beauty of holiness nor the blessedness of almsgiving. His daughter, he thought, should take her place in society and there display the talents and the winsome ways with which she was so highly gifted. It is evident that in his case the spirit of Christianity was almost entirely overruled by the spirit of the world. To

him it was nothing short of a humiliation to see his house turned into a harbour of refuge for the poor and the needy, so we are not surprised to hear that in one of his outbursts of remonstrance he commanded his daughter to make a special entrance for her train of beggars who were soiling the doorsteps of his house. It is hardly likely that the Baron expected to be taken at his word; but has not St. Paul declared that charity beareth all things and never falleth away ? The new door was actually made, and is still pointed out to visitors in this little town.

From a young lady friend of her own age and rank we have the following eulogy : "I had the pleasure of seeing Emilie de Vialar every Sunday when she used to pay us a visit accompanied by her father. While the Baron was always attired in elegant style, Emilie was dressed very simply, the only ornament on her dark dress being a small cross ; but otherwise there was nothing sombre about her. On the contrary, she was always bright and gay and indulged in laughter very freely. Her large brown eyes were expressive of sweetness, modesty and cheerfulness."

The amiability of Emilie de Vialar was such as would have won the approval of the great Father Faber. In his delightful commentary

on this subject he says: "We must edify others by the sweetness of Jesus. Kind and gentle words, such as those of our dear Lord, are an apostolate in themselves. There can be nothing melancholy, nothing gloomy, nothing harsh, nothing unwilling in our service of such a Father and Creator. Our worship must be happy in itself, happy in look and expression, happy in blithesomeness and in promptitude and in beautiful decorum, and it must also be such a worship, as, while it gladdens the tenderness of God and glorifies His paternal fondness, shall also fill our souls with that abounding happiness in Him which is our main strength in well-doing and in all holy sufferings." In the case of Emilie de Vialar we can unhesitatingly state that the calm serenity so characteristic of her was the result of sanctified sufferings. Her father, as we have seen, was ever in opposition to her piety and works of charity. Outside of her home she found many to censure and but few to approve of her zealous endeavours.

We now come to what is always an interesting subject of study, the development of a religious vocation. Very rarely is the call addressed by means of a direct and decisive, "Come follow Me." In the chosen soul there is usually a gradual development of divine

grace. Commenting on this subject, a spiritual writer has said that in following the growth of the inner life, we find, that, just as the bud contains the flower, so does holiness in the world contain in germ the beauties of the counsels of perfection, which can only blossom freely and flourish in fullness in the religious life. The love of poverty is there, but hidden under the necessary compliance with the claims of position and of society; in religion, not the love of poverty only, but its practice is maintained. In the world obedience may be exercised in some degree, but guiding each action of the day it is the very spirit of religious life. It is the same with all other supernatural virtues, and the desire to follow them out in their practical development is a religious vocation.

This was precisely the case with Emilie de Vialar in what regards the virtues of the religious state, but it was quite otherwise in regard to the special work she was to undertake. In connection with this work there was many a period of painful anxiety and suffering. While being impelled to action with an impetuosity that nothing could subdue, her director opposed her plans for the space of a whole year, during which time she was commanded to set aside all thoughts

of the future, to devote herself to the fulfilment of the duties of her state and to the works of charity which had already proved such a blessing to many in her neighbourhood. As regards the work she contemplated, her director admitted that she was destined for something great and important, the precise nature of which he did not yet understand. But Emilie de Vialar was not one of those weak souls that are discouraged by opposition. On the contrary, while in the crucible of suffering she gained strength and spiritual vigour.

During this period of probation she realized that divine love had so taken possession of her soul that union with God became an absolute necessity in her life. She felt that it was now impossible to continue the manner of life hitherto led. Besides, her spiritual director, after a while, made it clear to her that she could not continue to fulfil her duties to her father and, at the same time, give her care and attention to the vast number of sick persons to whom her boundless charity induced her to act the part of mother, nurse, and even humble servant.

The Baron de Vialar was now in failing health, and the loving care and devotedness of his daughter Emilie softened his heart

towards her to such an extent that he somewhat tolerated her desire to assuage the sufferings of the poor and the afflicted, but with regard to her vocation he remained obdurate. It is recorded in her autobiography that whenever she mentioned this subject to him she clasped the crucifix very firmly in her hand. In the light of coming events we shall see that this heroine of charity had need of the lessons of meekness and forbearance imparted by the emblem to which she thus clung for support and encouragement.

The thought of the religious vocation of his daughter, whenever it occurred to him, drove out the tolerance for charitable works, and aroused in the Baron the old spirit of opposition, making it more vehement than ever. Thus, on a certain occasion Emilie was met by her father as she was taking a jug of broth to a poor invalid. He seized the vessel and smashed it on the floor. His exasperation carried him even still further. One day while at table Emilie made some reference to her desire of entering religion, whereupon her father forgot himself so far as actually to throw a decanter at her head. Fortunately she escaped unhurt from this act of violence.

Like many of his contemporaries, the

Baron was influenced by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau, but, while he admired the virtues of Christianity and admitted that they confer a social distinction unique in its charm, he ignored the fact that certain means have to be used to obtain the graces necessary for the practice of these virtues. . .

The time had now come when, in obedience to her spiritual director, Emilie de Vialar had to set her hands to the great work for which God had destined her. Duty called her away from her father's home, but her filial affection was in no way diminished. In the events connected with her departure from home we note something similar to the experiences of the great St. Teresa, who says in her own forcible manner: "I remember well, and can affirm with truth, that when I left my father's house I felt such sorrow that I do not think that the pains of death can be greater. It seemed as if my very bones were disjointed by the anguish I endured." Although Emilie de Vialar was consoled by the thought that her friend and sister-in-law, Rosine de Bermond, a sweet, amiable, virtuous lady, could fill her own place in the household, still, the thought of leaving her father was to her a source of the keenest anguish. Of this we have proofs in her own

account of events connected with her long cherished plans.

"Towards the end of 1832," she writes, "having acquired a large fortune from my maternal grandfather, I immediately put in execution the plan I had long been contemplating. Now, although for the space of twenty years, life in my father's house had been so trying that I was enabled to endure it only by the consideration that, in so doing, I was submitting to the designs of Almighty God, nevertheless, I was sorely afflicted at the thought of grieving my father and of my final separation from him. However, with the aid of divine grace I overcame my feelings and left the home of my childhood in order to devote myself to the work that I believed to be for the glory of God and for the good of poor suffering humanity." Thus did this generous, zealous soul free herself from the ties and duties of home life and commence to put into practice the motto of the Congregation which she was to establish in the Church: *"Devotedness even unto Death."*

The earliest efforts in connection with the establishment of the Congregation bore the characteristic imprint of the Cross: this was evident in the persecution, injustice and calumny which it had to undergo. But in

the midst of the storm Mother Emilie's confidence in God was unshaken. Had He not revealed Himself to her in early youth and inspired her with a love of suffering and with the strength and courage to follow the way of the Cross ?

Her confidence was justified. The Hand of God directed a number of zealous souls to join in her works of charity, and, on Christmas Day 1832 they assembled together in the first convent of the Congregation, close to the church in her native town. As religious they were called Sisters of St. Joseph, of The Apparition. In connection with this title it must be borne in mind that St. Joseph, as well as our Blessed Lady, was favoured with the visit of a heavenly messenger. An angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to St. Joseph and revealed to him the august mystery of the Incarnation. This apparition was the first revelation of the Word, officially made to the world, in the person of St. Joseph. A special honour was, therefore, due to it.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of The Apparition was founded for this end. Its mission in the world is to recall this august revelation. A great and sublime mission, which, in the mind of the Foundress, was well calculated to inspire the

Sisters of St. Joseph with the most lively gratitude and the most ardent zeal, to spread to the ends of the earth the good tidings that this is the era of EMMANUEL—God with us. It was only towards the end of her life that the Foundress revealed the heavenly communication with which she was favoured in connection with this special mission. In their first convent chapel the most conspicuous amongst the ornaments and sacred images was a representation of the angelic messenger addressing the guardian of Mary, according to the record in the Gospel of St. Matthew. The Foundress next turned her attention to the framing of a set of rules for her new Congregation. A sort of provisional arrangement was made at first, and was gladly accepted by her new companions. After a short time the Archbishop of Albi, Mgr. de Gauly, approved of these rules, and henceforward this prelate, who was a man after God's Own Heart, became the protector of the new institute. He blessed its commencement, approved of its works, rejoiced in its development, and realized that there was a great future before it. On several occasions it was this minister of God who performed the ceremonies on the occasion of the reception or religious profession of the Sisters.

As regards their active life, the Sisters would devote themselves to works of charity and to the education of children. The aim and object of their life would be to make God known and loved. For many years the Mother Foundress had been a ministering angel of charity in her own neighbourhood; she would now expend her fortune and use her utmost endeavours to extend her benevolence in every possible way even to missionary enterprises in far distant lands.

While the religious of the new Sisterhood were carrying on their works of charity, which required, not only strength and courage, but a spirit of prayer and self-sacrifice truly sublime, they did not escape the censure of the world. Eugenie de Guerin noted down many interesting details under this head. To a friend she writes: "Emilie de Vialar is already at the convent with her little group of saintly souls. They are a subject of varied discussion. Some say that the Foundress is too young; others, that these young ladies ought to be cloistered; some few praise their zeal and call their work admirable." Then again, in answer to a question as to what Order did the new community belong to, the reply was: "It is still a sort of disorder." In a letter dated a few months later the same

writer says: "I have visited the convent and declare it to be simply magnificent—a beautiful chapel, fine large rooms and an atmosphere of peace and serenity throughout the whole place. It is a pleasure to spend some time there amongst the Sisters, so sweet, so amiable, and so happy are they, and, as for the Foundress, whom I know so intimately, I can only say that friendship with such a soul approaches the ideal, and is, indeed, in truth a very rare privilege."

The good work, then, was in progress; but it was still overshadowed by dark clouds. Several generous-hearted working girls were attracted to follow the example of the Sisters by devoting their lives to deeds of charity. Those who had heretofore benefited by their labours were extremely severe in their censure of Madame de Vialar, and this was to her an occasion of very great suffering. Furthermore, the new convent was subjected to a trial that must have been instigated by the powers of darkness, but which, at the same time, gives proofs of very special care and watchfulness on the part of divine Providence. The event is recorded as follows: On the 17th June 1833 the new society, now consisting of twenty-six religious, was in danger of utter destruction. The convent chapel was

not yet quite finished, and a number of packing cases containing ornaments, etc., had attracted the attention of a band of desperate characters. They formed a plan to secure possession of the treasures, and so determined were they on carrying it out, that they resolved to take the life of the Sisters should they offer any resistance. On that very evening Mother Emilie seemed to have been divinely inspired to take unusual precautions in regard to securing doors and windows, and so the designs of the burglars were utterly frustrated. The Sisters rendered thanks to Almighty God for their preservation from this danger. Later on they renewed their expressions of gratitude in a still more fervent manner, on hearing that this very band of assassins made a raid on another house in the town and actually murdered three of its inmates who tried to defend their property.

The young Foundress was in no way dismayed either by this or any other trial, disappointment or difficulty. She seemed to have implicit faith in the doctrine of Thomas a Kempis: "He whom God will defend, no man's malice can hurt."

In closing the chapter on this period of her life we are reminded of Cardinal Newman's commentary on the words of the Psalmist:

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." "Let no one go away with the impression that religion makes us take a gloomy view of the world and of life. It hinders us, indeed, from taking a superficial view and finding a vain transitory enjoyment in what we see ; but it forbids our immediate enjoyment, only to grant enjoyment in truth and fullness later on. It only says, if you begin with pleasure you will end with pain. It bids us begin with the Cross of Christ, and in that Cross we shall at first find sorrow, but out of this sorrow there will arise a happiness far greater than any enjoyment that the world can afford. The promises of Our Blessed Lord are never broken ; has not He Himself assured us that, 'Those who mourn shall be comforted' ?

CHAPTER III

WIDENING HORIZONS

"A blissful hour of sacred rite and song,
To crown the yearning and the toil of years ;
What though the way be steep, and years be long.
This hour is *worth* the toiling and the tears."

THE conquest of Algeria was one of the last achievements of the Bourbon dynasty. This region in which Christianity had so long flourished fell under the sway of the Mussulman in the eighth century. But even for two hundred years after this invasion there still remained some faithful followers of the religion of St. Cyprian and St. Augustin, St. Felicitas and St. Perpetua. In the history of the Arabs there is a record to the effect that in the tenth century there were five bishoprics in Algeria. It is also recorded that in Northern Africa many Christian captives persistently clung to the precious treasure of their holy faith. For these and several other reasons the acquisition of this territory excited great enthusiasm in France. Augustin de Vialar was amongst the most promi-

nent of the colonizers. While en route for Egypt, accompanied by an English artist, he was attracted by the novelty of the situation in Algeria and resolved to make his home there. The declared object of the conquerors appealed to his spirit of enterprise as well as to his patriotism. In a note to the Great Powers it was stated that the colonists aimed at the abolition of slavery and piracy, also at securing the safety of navigation in the Mediterranean waters, not only for France, but for all other countries. In the opinion of our ardent pioneer, Augustin de Vialar, the indigenous population should be kept in subjection by other means besides the force of arms. It would redound to the glory of France if the spirit of benevolence which knew how to compassionate every form of suffering could be extended to the new colony. De Vialar himself took the lead in this praiseworthy enterprise by fitting up, at his own expense, an ambulance and hospital exclusively for the benefit of the Arabs and other neighbouring tribes. For the funds necessary for the maintenance of this humane project he addressed a petition to the mother country. The king and queen headed the list with a generous donation and many others followed their example. But money

would not suffice. Devoted labourers were also needed for this work of charity.

We have seen that Mother Emilie had a special devotion to St. Francis Xavier. So great was this zealous missionary's eagerness to win souls to God that he could not be dismayed by any difficulties or dangers whatsoever. Once, when his friends entreated him not to expose himself to certain death by a voyage to a distant and solitary island, he replied: "Would not travellers undertake the journey if gold could be found there, and shall I hesitate when there are souls to be saved?" In like manner did Emilie de Vialar answer objectors when there was question of an appeal for helpers in promoting the works of charity just started in the new colony.

Towards the end of the year 1834 the General Council of Algiers charged one of its members, Augustin de Vialar, to send an application to his sister for a working staff for the hospital lately established. In this appeal the young Foundress saw the realization of a long-cherished dream—that of taking an active part in the work of the missions. Eugenie de Guerin makes reference, in a letter, to the departure of the Sisters: "Emilie de Vialar and three of her brave companions

left last Tuesday for Algiers. It is a praiseworthy undertaking, a grand enterprise. Many people look on it as a foolish step, but in the eyes of the world are not all the saints considered fools in their own generation? The Sisters are going to devote themselves to neglected children, the sick, the poor and the suffering; surely their labours will prove very beneficial and be productive of great blessings in a country where Christian charity is wholly unknown. Monsieur Augustin has informed my father about this great work and he himself has prepared the house in which the nuns are to take up their abode."

When the Sisters did arrive it was not a question of devotedness in regard to ordinary works of charity, but of tending a number of poor creatures stricken down with cholera. This epidemic was spreading to all parts of the town. Amongst the lower classes of the Jews it wrought terrible havoc. To Monsieur de Vialar was assigned the onerous task of endeavouring to stem the ravages of the dread disease by isolation and other preventive measures. So self-sacrificing was his devotedness to the poor unfortunate victims, that in recognition of his heroic endeavours he was named Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. Not less heroic was the devotedness of his

sister and her band of co-labourers. Moreover, their presence amongst these poor sufferers was productive of a rich harvest in supernatural favours and blessings. Quite a number of those who succumbed to the dread disease were consoled and comforted in the last struggle by the reception of the Sacraments. The epidemic lasted for three full months with unabated violence. During this trying period the zeal and self-sacrifice of the Sisters called forth many a glowing tribute of praise and appreciation. Mother Emilie herself was a perfect model of self-denial and self-abnegation. From six in the morning till eight at night, she was amongst the poor sufferers, trying to alleviate their pains, and, in order to procure soothing draughts for them, she spent twenty thousand francs of her own private income.

On the cessation of the epidemic Mother Emilie departed for Gaillac, as there was still much to be done in connection with the formation of the new Sisterhood. Prior to her return the Archbishop of Albi, who was the special protector and promoter of the good work, received glad tidings of the apostolate in Algiers. The representative of the Holy See addressed him thus: "I consider it my duty to inform you that the Sisters of whom

you are the special protector have, by reason of their devotedness in the recent epidemic, made a very favourable impression on the Mussulmans and Jews in these parts. All the Sisters are deserving of the highest praise; but Madame de Vialar calls for special mention. I cannot speak too highly of her. Our regret at her departure from our midst is lessened only by the thought that she will soon return."

The rules of the new institute had not yet been drawn up, so Mother Emilie went into retreat as a preparation for this important work. The direction and advice of a Jesuit Father who conducted the spiritual exercises proved very helpful and enlightening. The Ignatian method, which was followed during these days of prayer and meditation, was greatly appreciated by Mother Emilie. In fact, in her case it might be said that the words of Pope Paul III were verified to the letter. This Vicar of Christ had declared that "the exercises are full of piety and holiness, and that they would be very useful and advantageous to the edification and profit of the faithful." One who took a keen interest in the new Congregation remarked that it is no small guarantee of the vitality of this Institute of St. Joseph to have been thus impregnated

with the spirit of the great Ignatius who was such a consummate master in the spiritual life.

Kneeling before the tabernacle, Mother Emilie sought light and guidance in regard to the rule of life to be adopted for the Congregation. After due consideration the formula was drawn up and actually written down, in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament. As testimony of ecclesiastical approval the following document may be cited. "We, Francis de Gauly, by the grace of God, Archbishop of Albi, having read the rules of the Institute of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, founded at Gaillac, and knowing that the Institute is calculated to do much for the benefit of religion and society, and particularly for the poor, the ignorant and the suffering, and that in it is found a means of holiness for the persons whom Providence has called to be its members or who will become its members in future, have approved the rule and sanctioned its practice."

The Archbishop of Albi subsequently blessed the new Chapel and also received the vows of the Superioress and several of her companions. Who can say what were the sentiments of Mother Emilie, at the solemn moment of her consecration to God's service? On descending from this Thabor, she was ready

for any sacrifice she would be called on to make, either in regard to her own sanctification or for the good of souls. In the designs of Almighty God, this convent in Gaillac was to be the training school for many fervent and zealous members of the Congregation. By means of prayer, suffering and self-sacrifice, they were rendered capable of spreading around them the good odour of Christ, not only in their own immediate neighbourhood, but in the missionary fields afar.

From the records of this period it would seem that the work of the new Sisterhood was begun under the most favourable auspices. As for the Arab population in Algiers they were simply lost in wonder, on seeing the care and attention bestowed upon them by the nuns of St. Joseph. Pointing to Mother Emilie's crucifix one of them said. "He who is on that Cross must be very good indeed, since He makes you do these things for us." Deeply touched on hearing these words, she seemed from that moment more eager than ever to sacrifice the whole of her fortune, in order to develop the works of the Institute. Besides the school for Christian and Jewish children, the Sisters opened an infirmary which was a great boon to the poorer classes. The Arabs of the plains used to bring in their

sick for treatment, and they begged and pleaded for some of the Sisters to come and dwell amongst them. One of their chiefs, known as the serpent of the desert, was most insistent in his petitions for this favour. On hearing the remark that his people might not show the respect due to the Sisters, he replied: "If an Arab should show the least want of reverence to the Cross that you wear, I would have him put to death immediately." Commenting on the work of this period, Eugenie de Guerin refers to Mother Emilie as another St. Teresa or St. Jane de Chantal.

From the previous chapter, it will be remembered that the Baron de Vialar showed no appreciation for the works of charity to which his daughter was so devoted. His opposition developed into feelings of bitterness and enmity when she began her career of entire devotedness. It was only after many years that a reconciliation was effected. The happy event is thus described by Mother Emilie herself in a letter to her aunt: "I have now some news to give you which you will be very pleased to hear. On the occasion of the marriage of Augustin, I asked him to inquire if I might go to see my father, and this time he did not refuse. He seems very happy over my visit. Had I been obliged to go

away again without seeing him, it would have been a cause of great sadness to me, for, when there are long journeys to be made, who can tell what may happen ? During my stay at Gaillac, it was a source of grief to me to have the doors of my father's home actually closed against me."

But troubles still greater were in store for Mother Emilie in the near future. A spiritual writer has remarked that if the Cross comes in the way that you expect it, then it is no Cross at all. Is this distinguishing sign, unexpectedness, to be found in the trials that now await this zealous servant of God? We shall see.

"Although the great apostle St. Paul laboured for the edification and salvation of others, as much as he could, and as much as lay in him, yet he could not prevent his being sometimes judged or despised by others." That these very words are applicable to Mother Emilie, may be seen from the following letter :

"I defend her as far as possible from all that is said against her and her work, for I know her intentions are pure, her works of charity of great benefit to the needy and forlorn, and as for the system of education adopted in her schools, suffice it to say that it is truly Christian and, in this respect, a con-

trast to that which but too often prevails elsewhere." "O, poor world"! adds the writer, "O, poor world! How frequently are you not deluded by false show and empty joy, but let us not heed either your wiles or your reproaches. When one works for God the judgements of men can be set at naught."

We have seen that Mother Emilie found no difficulty in the precept: "Overcome evil by good," and since she so generously renounced the world and its vanities, it may be safely asserted that, for her, there would be no difficulty in setting at naught either its opposition or censure. A crucial test is now awaiting her at the hands of an ecclesiastical superior, a crushing trial which will call for the practice of the most heroic virtues. Referring to difficulties of a similar nature, the great Saint Teresa declared that, far from troubling her, they inundated her soul with a joy so intense that she could not help showing it. "In my transports," she said, "I no longer wondered at David's dancing before the Ark. I could have wished to do nothing else." Now if Mother Emilie does not display such exuberant joy, she is none the less courageous, for she is firmly convinced that Our Blessed Lord never forsakes those who are sincerely desirous of serving Him.

CHAPTER IV

SHADOW OF THE CROSS

"Oh ! Mary, in thy daughters still, Thine image pure,
if pale, we find,
The crystal of the flawless will, the soul irradiating
the mind."

Aubrey de Vere.

FATHER FABER says, "The law of suffering which belongs to Jesus, touches all who come nigh Him. That law wound itself around each of the Apostles upon whom the blessed choice of the Incarnate Word had fallen. It went with them into all lands. It overshadowed them in all vicissitudes. It walked with them along the Roman roads, as if it was their guardian angel : it strode by their uneasy galleys on the stormy waters of the Mediterranean. They were Apostles. They must be like their Lord. They must enter into the cloud, and the darkness of the eclipse must fall upon them on the top of some Calvary or other, from Rome to Bactria, from Spain to Hindustan." For Mother Emilie, that cloud is now gathering over the scene of her apostolate in Algeria ; but ere its dismal

shadow is cast upon her path, she is favoured with ineffable consolation from heaven, as well as with many visible blessings on the works of the Institute.

Very interesting details mark the new foundation made in France at this period. Of the many instances recorded, we quote but one. A friend, who helped to instal the Sisters in the provincial town of St. Affrique, described the enthusiasm with which they were welcomed. The free gift of a house and a chapel betokened the joy of the people at having them in their midst. The Convent was besieged from morning till night. Everybody wanted to see the nuns.

Mother Emilie continued to be the soul of the Institute and the organizer of all its activities, so we are not surprised to hear that she was elected to the office of Superior General, by common consent of all its members. The Archbishop of Albi, the venerated protector and faithful friend of the Congregation, expressed his approval of the appointment in a letter of congratulation in which he also referred to the pleasure afforded him by the marked development of the Institute so recently established.

It has been remarked that even the humblest, dullest, most commonplace life, once it

becomes centred in God, is flooded with light, love and poetry. We cannot then be surprised on finding many a glowing tribute to the beauties of Nature from the pen of Mother Emilie. Describing a voyage to Tunis, she writes: "The sea is simply magnificent. The blue waters of the Mediterranean beneath, the azure vault above, the numerous isles, the white-crested wavelets, the exhilarating effect of the sea breezes, are all truly admirable. Well may it be said that our Heavenly Father has scattered tokens of His Love over all the earth, and thus does He give us occasion to uplift our hearts in hymns of joy and praise."

But, the beauty of holiness, the beauty of the moral ideals taught and fostered by the Church of Christ, called forth still greater enthusiasm. In a petition to the Archbishop of Albi, relative to a new foundation in Tunis, Mother Emilie declared that she was full of joy at the thought that our Blessed Lord deigned to make use of her for His good work in that city where His Name was hardly known. The reply was encouraging: "I not only permit, but most earnestly exhort you to carry out this enterprise. Such a design must be inspired by the Holy Ghost. That it will prove an arduous undertaking, I

am quite convinced, for the enemy of souls seems to have full sway in that quarter, but you know from experience that God will protect you."

Mother Emilie was in like manner encouraged and supported by the Bishop of Algiers. In a report addressed to the Holy See, she said, "Mgr. Dupuch was always kind and affectionate towards us. He often came to see us. I spoke to him about the religious profession of twelve of my Sisters and he not only consented to officiate at the ceremony but also to conduct the preparatory retreat. In almost all the instructions and exhortations, there was some reference to the work done by our Sisters, either by way of praise or appreciation."

Furthermore, when there was question of another new foundation in Northern Africa, Mgr. Dupuch, on his own initiative, introduced the Mother Foundress and Sisters to the authorities and to the people. Again, on the day after their arrival, it was under the guidance of this prelate that they made a little pilgrimage to the ruins of Hippo. On the spot sanctified by the presence of the great St. Augustin, the Bishop celebrated Holy Mass, the Sisters receiving Communion from his own hands. As an act of charity

in commemoration of the illustrious St. Cyprian, Mgr. Dupuch adopted twenty-five orphans on the occasion of the feast day of that martyr—the number corresponded to the number of gold coins given by the saint to the executioner who was to strike the fatal blow—and these objects of charity were confided to the care of the Sisters. Finally it is recorded that not a week passed without some communication from His Lordship relative to different works of mercy for which the Sisters of St. Joseph were needed. In all these events we have a striking contrast to the painful occurrences by which they were succeeded. . .

On the eve of her departure for Tunis, Mother Emilie called on the Bishop, but he refused to see her. His Lordship had formed plans relative to the Congregation, regarding which he could hardly expect her approval.

The Institute had been in existence for seven years which may be called its period of probation. The rules had been approved by the Archbishop of Albi. The Sisters were now obliged to observe these rules; in the meanwhile, the Bishop of Algiers proposed changes which would affect the constitutions. Under his jurisdiction the Congregation was to be purely diocesan. "Do you consent," he writes

to Mother Emilie, "for the present, and during the period in which your society will remain in Algiers, to be entirely subject to episcopal authority, not only to me, but to my successors. Furthermore, it is required of you to consent to any changes or modifications that we may think proper to make, in regard to your rules and constitutions."

To agree to such conditions was utterly impossible, so Mother Emilie was under the painful necessity of resisting her ecclesiastical superior. Writing on this subject she says: "My heart is torn with anguish over this sad event; but I am determined to resist to the utmost of my power. It is quite clear to me that a religious community by submitting to such an arrangement, would be signing its own death-warrant. The words of our Blessed Lord are at all times true: every house divided against itself will perish; besides, by agreeing to such orders, I should fail in my duty to God, to the Archbishop of Albi who approved of our rules, and to the members of our Congregation now bound to observe them. It is a crushing blow, but my trust in Providence is still unshaken."

As a matter of fact, many friends and helpers *did* come forward to encourage and support Mother Emilie. The Archbishop of

Albi assured her that the rules and constitutions could not be thus tampered with, and that consequently there was nothing to fear. In the meanwhile the persecution continued. The Sisters in the convents of Algiers were placed under an interdict. For nine long and weary months they were deprived of the reception of the Sacraments. But persecution, no matter whence it comes, is permitted by God; nay more, does it not often seem to be ordained or designed by Him for His Own Wise Ends? As a result of these trials we see that the virtues of Mother Emilie and her Sisters reached a high degree of heroism. Besides, owing to these sad occurrences, their protector and spiritual guide urged them to seek the approbation of the Holy See, as a safeguard for the constitutions and rules of their Institute. Subsequent events afford still more convincing proofs that through patience and resignation the burden of tribulation is converted into an assured hope of comfort from God.

Mother Emilie resolved to depart for Rome, but was delayed by yet another trial. Her father was seriously ill. She hastened to see him and, owing to his indifference in regard to religion, she fell a prey to the greatest anxiety on the journey thither. To add to her

troubles, the boat by which she travelled was unexpectedly delayed at Corsica. But comfort awaited her on shore, for on reaching Gaillac she had the pleasure of hearing that her father was out of danger.

The steps of the Mother Foundress were now eagerly bent towards the city wherein dwells Christ's Vicar. If the new Congregation was to take part in the works of charity, in which the universal Church is engaged, it must be supported by the highest authority in that Church. . . .

From the eternal city the following communication was addressed to Mgr. Dupuch: "I have come to Rome led thither by God's Holy Will, since it is the will of my ecclesiastical superior and director. The constitutions of our Institute have been placed before His Holiness, who has confided them to the care of the Congregation authorized to deal with such affairs, so, for the time being, I cannot make any arrangements in regard to the house under your jurisdiction in Algiers." This letter was concluded in the most respectful terms. Sad to say, the situation remained unchanged. Though a prey to the keenest anguish, Mother Emilie endeavoured to encourage the Sisters by letters which seemed to be divinely inspired. To the Superior of

one of those houses she writes: "Dear Sister Elizabeth, you can never understand or fully realize how our trials and difficulties have been the means of securing the sympathy and support of the Holy See and the Cardinals, especially since you have been deprived of the reception of the Sacraments. Our Blessed Lord wills to treat us as His true spouses by making us follow the path that He Himself has marked out for us, the path of tribulations and combats. Under existing conditions it is impossible to work in peace and tranquillity; but we shall be assisted and sustained by the Church, and, thus supported, we shall enjoy a sense of security which will enable us to make the necessary efforts to attain the perfection which our holy state requires, even if such efforts have to be made in the midst of the greatest difficulties."

In another letter Mother Emilie gives an account of an audience with the Pope during which His Holiness remarked that "Almighty God must have great designs on her Congregation, since He permitted herself and her Sisters to be subjected to trials so painful to endure." To her words of assurance relative to entire submission and exact obedience to the Holy See, the Holy Father replied in a most gracious manner, saying: "I believe it.

I believe it," and then reminded Mother Emilie of the congratulations already addressed to the Sisters who had so generously devoted themselves during the terrible epidemic in Algiers. To this His Holiness added a promise to take a personal interest in her work in the future. On the same occasion there was an opening made for what proved to be a flourishing convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Eternal City itself. But as for their apostolate in Algiers, although, as already pointed out, many graces and blessings were bestowed upon the Sisters during the sad conflict, still, in the following letters and petitions, we have indications of their sad plight, as well as a foreshadowing of future events. A zealous labourer in the cause of charity, fearing that the Sisters who so greatly helped in his good works could not long continue in that field of labour, writes thus: "Has the time come when your ardent charity must shed its blessings elsewhere? I fear that such is the case. Sad and gloomy for me will be the day of your departure, the day when the sick, the poor and the needy will be deprived of their second providence."

Those who benefited by the devotedness of the Sisters were no less appreciative. Several petitions were addressed to the Sovereign

Pontiff in their behalf. In one of these documents, special stress was laid on the work of the Sisterhood as being a manifestation of the beauty and sublimity of the religion by which it was inspired.

The petition of the Mussulman Community is so noteworthy, both in language and sentiment, that we transcribe it in full: "Most Holy Father. Praise be to the One only God. All power belongs to Him alone. To the personage who is the support and the most distinguished ornament of mankind, to him who may be considered as a star whose bright rays illumine the entire world. The friend of truth and justice whose benevolence extends to all human beings, the worthy protector of the religion of Jesus. The Sovereign Pontiff who defends the oppressed against the oppressor, the Teacher, the noble Master, our Lord, the Pope!

"After this salutation, which is so justly due, we would bring to your Lordship's notice an event which we, Algerian Moslems, most sadly deplore. We have learned with deep regret that the religious who for the past six years have given so many proofs of devotedness, are now obliged to leave our country and return to France. The equity and justice of your Excellency are well known to us

and thus it is that we appeal to your generosity, praying that we may be spared this great sorrow. These women have shown the greatest affection and pity for all poor sufferers, no matter what their religion may be. Whenever an opportunity is afforded them to perform an act of charity, they are ever ready, and even in case of grave maladies which usually strike terror into human beings, they do not cease to devote themselves. All the poor sufferers who go to them for help are tended by them. In like manner those who are unable to leave their homes, are visited and cared for. In a word, we have come to look on their presence in our midst as a source of inestimable blessings.

"It is for these reasons that we now appeal to your generosity, praying you to look favourably on our petition to have these women remain here; we most earnestly beseech you not to allow them to abandon our country.

"To you do we render the expression of the highest of our praises. To you our most sincere wishes for your welfare and happiness. This act of kindness will ever gratefully be remembered by us; moreover, we shall raise our hearts to God most high, the Supreme Being, praying that He may ever bestow upon

you the blessings of peace and that He may ever guard, guide and direct you.

"Written at Algiers the 15th Chaban 1257 (1st October, 1841) by express desire of the Chief citizens of this town, whose names are hereon subscribed.

"Acned-Ben-Mohamed. Mufti Henafi," etc.

The petitions were forwarded to Rome; but, pending the settlement of affairs appertaining to the Institute in general, the situation in Algiers became even more aggravated, as will be seen from the subjoined letter.

Madame de Vialar to Count Guyot, Minister of the Interior:

"Deign to accept the expression of my profound gratitude for the benevolent protection you have at all times accorded to our Sisterhood. This favour was appreciated in a special manner during my long absence from Algiers. You are already aware of our great difficulties owing to the exactions of the ecclesiastical superior of that mission. His Lordship would have us separate the House under his jurisdiction from those in France, and, in so doing, set aside the authority of the Archbishop of Albi. To this and other proposed changes, I cannot in conscience submit. The situation is now extremely grave, and, in the event of our being obliged

to depart from this colony, I appeal to you that you may use your authority in regard to the indemnities that we may lawfully claim. We have spent large sums of money in erecting houses and in developing our charitable works. I feel that it is a sacred duty to the fifty young girls who have joined me in making these sacrifices and for whose future I am responsible, to put forward these our claims, and beseech you to see that justice is done to us in regard to these matters."

The reply was favourable. Count Guyot took the necessary steps to secure for the Sisters the compensation, which, according to his opinion, they had every right to claim. At the same time this official expressed a wish that the colony would not be thus deprived of the services of so useful an Institute.

CHAPTER V

THE SHADOW DEEPENS

"Ah! Lord," she cried, "when wilt Thou cease to sow our path with difficulties?" An answer came, "Do not complain my child, for it is thus that I treat my friends . . ." "Alas! Lord," she replied, "perhaps that is why Thou hast so few."—*Life of St. Teresa.*

THE trouble continued in Algiers, but Mother Emilie remained undaunted. Her trust in Providence only increased as the clouds grew darker, for she was firmly convinced that God never forsakes those who are eagerly desirous of serving Him. Hearing that the unjust persecution was extended to another convent in that region, she wrote to the Sisters: "My dear Children, keep up your courage, for Almighty God will sustain you with special graces in lieu of those you are now deprived of. Nothing can diminish the peace and joy of a clear conscience. Then, my beloved Sisters, I say again be of good courage, bear your trials bravely and patiently. This privation will soon be remedied, for the Church is now interested in our

cause. During the fifteen months of my sojourn in Rome I have suffered much—even more on your account than on my own. And now the thought of your privations affects me still more keenly than heretofore —to think that we are in the Pascal season and you are deprived of the Sacraments. Oh, my dear Sisters, let it be your earnest endeavour to accept this trial in the spirit of sacrifice. Bear in mind that it comes upon you as a result of your zeal and devotedness to the interests of Jesus; surely this thought will sustain you."

At the period in question, Mother Emilie was greatly encouraged by a saintly priest, the Abbé Bourgade. Though desirous of mitigating the harsh treatment to which the Sisters were subjected, this zealous missionary was obliged to await the decision of the Holy See. On the 17th of March, 1842, the following communication was addressed to him from Rome by Mother Emilie herself: "Knowing how eagerly you have longed to see things favourably settled for us, I hasten to give you an account of my interview with Cardinal Ostini. His Eminence received me very graciously and gave me the joyful news that the Holy Father had provided confessors for our Sisters in Algiers. Eighteen Jesuit

Fathers have been sent to that mission. His Eminence also gave me to understand that the Holy See would not receive the Bishop, until he had promised to let us have confessors."

Thus one phase of the trouble had been settled, but there was yet another in connection with the civil authorities. Mgr. Dupuch had prevailed on the government to have the Sisters of St. Joseph replaced by the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. Mother Emilie refers to this in her letter to the Abbé: "The Cardinal then informed me that steps had already been taken for our removal from the Algerian mission, but that we would be allowed indemnities and also the time necessary to prepare for departure—even six months if we so desired. In reply to this unexpected information, I told the Cardinal that my brother would defend my interests in regard to compensation for expenditure, etc. I then informed His Eminence that it was not solely for this affair that I had come to Rome, but rather for the approbation of our rules. 'Ah,' said the Cardinal, quite taken aback at the tranquil manner in which I received such disappointing news, 'I am going to see about that immediately.' He then showed me the greatest sympathy and fatherly kindness,

and, referring once more to our painful experiences in Algiers, he said, 'What's to be done, you will do good elsewhere.' "

Prior to her departure from Rome, Mother Emilie received a letter from Mgr. Dupuch confirming what the Cardinal Prefect had told her with regard to indemnities, but a month afterwards this promise was retracted. Now, considering that the Sisters had come to Algiers at the request of the civil authorities and that they had spent a great amount of their own money in establishing their houses in that field of labour, this refusal of compensation cannot be viewed in any other light but that of gross injustice. The situation was a trying one. However, while thus harassed in regard to material concerns, the Foundress was cheered by glad tidings from Rome—the laudatory decree in favour of the new Congregation was issued by the Holy See.

Under these circumstances one may note this special characteristic of the work of Emilie de Vialar: every great favour, every period of development in the Institute, is either preceded or followed by a great trial, grief or disappointment. The grief and humiliation of the expulsion from the mission in Africa proved to be far greater than was at first anticipated. The Sisters were prepared

to quit this scene of their labours without complaint or murmur. They were given to understand that the religious of St. Vincent de Paul would take over charge immediately on their arrival; but it was likewise intimated that timely notice would be given to those who were compelled to leave. . . The order for departure fell like an unexpected thunderbolt; not a moment's warning was granted them, not even the time to bid adieu to those who looked on them as ministering angels in the hospitals, and as devoted mothers in their orphanages. While actually engaged in the discharge of these duties they received an order to depart at once.

With the affectionate sympathy so characteristic of her, Mother Emilie herself awaited her sorrowing children in the house to which she had directed them to go. Her welcome was inspiring: "Dear Sisters, why give way to grief? Be of good courage. This is only a trial. We must learn not only to submit to adversity, but even to be pleased when God permits that we should be ill-treated. Did not our Blessed Lord suffer much more than we have gone through?" Then, by way of further encouragement, she gave the Superioress a picture on which were inscribed the words of the Beatitude: "Blessed are they

that mourn for they shall be comforted." This gift was long preserved by the Sisters, as a souvenir of the first lessons of their venerated Mother.

The rupture between the Foundress and the Bishop, Mgr. Dupuch, was now complete. The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, transplanted to another soil, developed and prospered in a marvellous manner; but troubles and financial difficulties so beset the Bishop that he was obliged to resign his jurisdiction in Algeria. Nay more, being harassed and pursued by his creditors he was obliged to seek refuge amongst the tribes of the desert. The truly Christ-like spirit of the sainted Foundress shone forth on this occasion. Mother Emilie followed the maxim: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good." She took what is known as the revenge of the saints, for it was with her brother, the Baron de Vialar, that the unfortunate fugitive sought and found a harbour of refuge in his dire distress.

Some years afterwards Mgr. Dupuch wrote to Mother Emilie, and in terms the most respectful and touching did he try to make amends for the past. In reply to a suggestion that this letter should be preserved amongst the historical records of the Congregation, the

Foundress replied: "No, it is not befitting or proper that a dignitary of the Church should so humble himself to a religious." And, there and then, she herself destroyed the letter with her own hands. Thus did humble submission, for God's sake, enable Mother Emilie to obtain such a mastery over herself that she could submit to His designs with perfect freedom. Even at this early stage in her religious life, her soul seemed fully conscious of the beauty of virtue and holiness. . . "What would Christ like you to be?" asks a commentator on the personality of the saints. "He would," he tells us, "like you to be holy in your own personal way and measure, according to your own character and according to your own circumstances and surroundings, your own true, good, noble, beautiful self, for it is your own true self that He loves. But He would like that self to be uplifted, chastened, ennobled, beautified, until you should become like to the beautiful dream which He dreamt of you, when He loved you from the old, old day when He died for the love of your love. . . Be your own true natural self breathed upon by the love of the great, strong, beautiful, living Christ". . . From the following letter it is evident that Mother Emilie learned His own divine lesson of hu-

mility, as expressed in the exhortation, "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart."

Writing to an official in Algiers she says: "Most ardently do I desire that the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul who have been summoned here by the Bishop, Mgr. Dupuch, may continue the mission that we began in the interests of religion and humanity. I sincerely hope that they may be even more successful in their efforts than we have been. It will always be a consolation to us to have prepared the way for their Congregation in this field of labour. Surely it matters little by whom the work is done, provided God be glorified by an abundant harvest. . ."

Should the question be asked as to how such a state of affairs could have come about—how such dissensions could have arisen between those who were working for the same noble ends? Well, one must bear in mind that the canon law, regulating the power of bishops in regard to religious Congregations, was not then as clear and decided as at the present day. Besides, there is the consideration of different points of view, so varying and divergent even with the clear-sighted. The prelate seemed to have been influenced by exaggerated notions of his own rights. As for the transgression of the rules of justice

and equity, the Bishop's own subsequent humble and heartfelt apology is the truest answer. He sincerely repented and endeavoured to make amends for the trouble he had caused the Sisters, as well as for the great losses sustained on his account. A short time before his death these protestations were renewed in the most touching terms.

Such conflicts, moreover, seem to be designed, or at any rate, permitted by Almighty God in order to try certain chosen souls whom He has destined for great undertakings. As a matter of fact persecutions of this nature are recorded in the history of most religious orders. To quote but one example: Mother Javouhey, the Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny and a contemporary of Mother Emilie, was tried in a similar way. She wrote to her Sisters about the Bishop of Autun. "This good prelate wishes to replace me as Superior General. Now, in the constitutions of our Congregation, it is definitely stated that the temporal affairs of our Sisterhood are to be controlled and regulated by the Mother General and her councillors. I beseech you to adhere to this rule, otherwise the Congregation will soon cease to exist." She further remarks that Madame de Vialar had difficulties and troubles similar

to those with which they themselves had had to contend for the past forty years; "if her work is not the work of God, I pity her, and that with good reason, for she will not succeed; but if it is she has nothing to fear, either from the opposition of men or from the malice of the powers of darkness." But God is ever merciful and never fails those who, having set aside all personal advantages, think only of making Him known and loved. St. Paul says: "In doing good let us not fail, for in due time we shall reap, not failing."

Whilst matters were at their worst in Algeria, and her Sisters were being unceremoniously dismissed from that mission field, the Mother Foundress was consoled by the words of the Supreme Pontiff, as expressed in the laudatory decree with which her Institute was favoured. Here it may not be inappropriate to quote the words of an eminent ecclesiastic, relative to such decrees: "The approbation of religious orders was reserved to the Holy See by the fourth Council of Lateran in 1215. It enrolls the Congregation, so approved, in the regular army of the Church Militant and confers more weighty authority and a higher sanction upon the constitutions; nay more, it guarantees their inviolability by protecting them from the

attack of any rash innovation. Hence it is also a guarantee of unity; rules thus protected will be the same everywhere and an order approved by the Holy See shares the marks that characterize the true Church. It will be one, immutable, independent and universal." Now it is hardly necessary to remark that the very circumstances which induced Mother Emilie to seek the approbation of her Institution, also served to make her appreciate the privileges conferred upon it. How her heart must have glowed with gratitude to Almighty God as she read this decree of the Sovereign Pontiff:

"Emilie de Vialar founded a pious association of women in the diocese of Albi in France. In accordance with her desire, the members of this association are to be known as Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, in memory of the apparition of the angel to the patriarch, St. Joseph. The Sisters, by means of the simple vows, are to endeavour to sanctify their own souls and also to take an active part in working for the salvation of others: they are to devote themselves to the care of the sick and the suffering; to the Christian education of young girls amongst whom are included the children of the poor and the needy.

"This pious Institute, being especially aided and protected by Almighty God, has developed in a very short time and the Sisters have devoted themselves to the duties of their calling even to a heroic degree.

"Being convinced of the necessity of procuring the approbation of the Holy See for this good work, the Foundress has come to Rome humbly to solicit this favour at the hands of our Holy Father, Gregory XVI. Having held a consultation with certain cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars and having likewise noted the letters of recommendation of the Archbishop of Albi, His Holiness is confident that this new society will be productive of abundant fruits in the cause of Christianity, and so, has decided that the end of this Institute be approved by a laudatory decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

"The examination and approbation of the constitutions have been deferred for the time being. In the meanwhile, let the Sisters of this society continue, under the guidance of the ecclesiastical authorities, to labour for their own sanctification and that of their neighbour, but above all, they shall direct their most earnest endeavours to inspire young girls with the fear of God and with the

virtues of prudence and modesty, in a word, with the love of religion; they will likewise devote themselves zealously and joyously to works of charity in regard to the sick. In these undertakings let them bear in mind that they are responding to the desire of the Sovereign Pontiff, to whom nothing can be more agreeable or more desirable than devotedness to the Christian education of youth and to the relief of the poor and unfortunate.

"Given at Rome, in the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on the 6th day of May 1842, feast of the martyrdom of St. John the Evangelist. . . Signed F. Cardinal Ostini Prelate. . ."

A pious writer says that what we suffer patiently in any good work we have undertaken, obtains for us grace necessary to ensure its success. However, in this instance, the blessings bestowed upon Mother Emilie were not only the reward of a patient endurance of the Cross, but it was underneath its sacred shadow that they were bestowed upon her. Thus even with the announcement of the signal favour accorded by the Holy See, came the sad news of the death of the saintly prelate, the Archbishop of Albi, who had done so much to enable her to obtain this privilege. However, there was great conso-

lation in the thought that God had spared him to guide and direct her, until the Congregation had been approved by the Vicar of Christ.

An incident which occurred at this time will fittingly close this storm-stressed chapter. It shows how, despite all difficulties, Mother Emilie never wavered in the service of God and her neighbour, and how God rewarded her virtue. On going to visit one of her Convents in the Near East she travelled by a boat singularly lacking in accommodation and conveniences. The voyage lasted much longer than had been anticipated, with the result that the food ran short. Without the slightest hesitation, Mother Emilie gave up her own share of provisions for the general use. For eight days she and her companion had no better fare than a little musty rice boiled in water. From a letter written later on, we learn that during those days Almighty God had been pleased to grant her the grace of intimate union with Him so that, in a spiritual sense, the journey was a real pleasure trip and a source of the happiest recollections.

Thus favoured with heavenly consolation and sustained by a sense of security based on the "laudatory decree" of the Institute, the zealous servant of God can face the future

with heavenly hope and undaunted courage —two virtues especially necessary for the sufferings and humiliations which still awaited her. Thus far she has bravely trodden the way of the Cross, but she has not yet reached the summit of Calvary.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIELD AFAR

"Now then dearly beloved, be of good courage and boldly fulfil the work of the Lord, which you have in hand, so as to justify us and save the souls of many. Let not your hand cease to work, nor your foot to visit your flock. Give alms abundantly and raise up everywhere the Holy Church of God."—*St. Dunstan.*

THE successor of Monseigneur de Gauly, the Archbishop of Albi, took possession of his See on the 15th of July 1842. Mother Emilie soon became aware that the new prelate was not favourably disposed towards her. Misled by false accusations he actually believed her to be a person who took great delight in travelling, thus wasting her time and squandering her money. Under these trying circumstances she wrote to her spiritual adviser, Father Bourgade, begging him to direct and enlighten her. In concluding her letter she asked for special prayers and remarked that, if called upon to face some new stratagem of the powers of darkness, she greatly feared the consequences.

This may seem to indicate a want of that

spirit of detachment in regard to reputation, which, according to St. Teresa, is essential to the soul aiming at a life of prayer and union with God. But in point of fact, Mother Emilie was concerned about her reputation, only in so far as it affected the work of her Institute. It will be remembered that when the laudatory decree was conferred by the Sovereign Pontiff, it was decided to postpone the approbation of the rules and constitutions. At this period the necessary steps had been taken to secure this approbation; only a word of recommendation from the Bishop was now wanting —this, His Lordship refused—hence the anxiety expressed in the letter to Father Bourgade. In the reference to the stratagems of the powers of darkness, there seems to be a presentiment of the deceptions and contradictions, the heartaches and humiliations which yet awaited her. But before entering into details regarding these sad happenings, we shall turn to brighter vistas.

A joyful perseverance in spite of obstacles is said to be a proof of a divine vocation. If this characteristic is made manifest in what has already been recorded, does it not shine out with still greater lustre in the following events?

Mother Emilie used to tell her companions

that, in the course of her voyages in the Mediterranean, she frequently thought of the adventures and thrilling experiences of the great Apostle, St. Paul, more especially of his shipwreck in those waters. In the annals of the Institute, there is a record of an event which bears striking resemblance to that which so often formed the subject of her contemplation. On the return journey from a visitation of her houses in Tunis, Mother Emilie and her companions were overtaken by a terrible storm. The ship was in danger of sinking. The Sisters prayed most fervently for heavenly help and protection. The tempest drove their frail barque in the direction of Malta. In this extremity, Mother Emilie added to their prayers a vow to found a house of her Congregation in Valetta, the capital of the island. And should the Almighty preserve their lives and enable them to perform this act of gratitude, they resolved to place the chapel of this new convent under the patronage of the great Apostle, St. Paul. After several days of a life and death struggle, they were able to effect a landing on one of the smaller islands. Mother Emilie then thought of making another visit to Rome, but such was the eagerness of the people of Malta to keep the Sisters in their midst, that it was

decided to set about the immediate fulfilment of their vow.

The good work was soon commenced and was visibly blessed by Providence; but it is to be expected that the self-sacrificing devotedness of the Sisters must be put to the test. In course of time, many were the difficulties and trials with which they had to contend. In one of the most severe, an English member of their Community reminded the local Superior of the promise made by the Mother Foundress to place their chapel under the protection of St. Paul. "Let that promise be fulfilled," said she, "and we shall obtain the necessary help from heaven." A painting, representing the shipwreck of the great Apostle, near the island of Malta, was ordered from Rome, and placed in the sanctuary of their little chapel. The Sisters were not disappointed in their hopes; from that time onwards, that is over a period of well-nigh a hundred years, their work prospered in that island and the houses there are amongst the most flourishing in the Congregation.

At the time of their arrival, there were many convents of cloistered religious, but few for purposes of education or the care of the sick. With the coming of the Sisters of St. Joseph, these urgent needs were supplied,

and consequently their work was greatly appreciated. The best proof of this appreciation lies in the fact that quite a number of Maltese girls were attracted to join the Institute and many English and Irish subjects were here recruited later on.

It may not be inappropriate to cast a passing glance at the little island thus associated with the work of our venerable Foundress.

In extent it is very small, the entire area being but ninety-five square miles. There it stands as a sort of watch-tower in the waters of the blue Mediterranean. As regards general appearance one is struck with the aspect presented by magnificent stone structures, monuments of beautiful marble, etc. Were there only a background of stately trees, the view would be exceedingly picturesque; but here Nature has been very sparing of her gifts, especially in regard to verdure. As regards governing powers, the island has known many a change. In ancient times it was ruled by the Phœnicians, the Carthagenians, and the Romans. In the year 1522 it was granted by Charles V to the Knights of John of Jerusalem. In 1565 these valiant warriors, under the leadership of La Valette, withstood a terrific assault on the part of the

Turks, who, for the space of three months, persisted in their attempt at conquest. The great corsair, Dragut, was killed, then they withdrew their forces and made no further attempt at conquering the island. But, by far the most noteworthy conquest of the country was that made by the great Apostle St. Paul, after his miraculous preservation from shipwreck. This great Apostle must have imparted to his converts something of his own steadfastness of purpose, for the people of Malta have kept the faith through the many changing scenes of their eventful history, and at the present day they are most intensely Catholic.

The student of history finds in this small isle many interesting mementoes of bygone days. Among these, the Church of St. John, in Valetta, holds a very prominent place, containing, as it does, numerous sepulchres of the Grand Masters as well as memorials of distinguished personages in the annals of knighthood. In the choir may be seen a colossal group in white marble representing the Baptism of Our Lord. The high altar, designed by the famous artist Bernini, is adorned by a magnificent medallion representing the Last Supper. The gates of silver on a balustrade of white marble, in the

Chapel of Our Lady, are also objects of great interest and admiration.

The former capital, Notablie, is one of the oldest towns in Europe, as it was flourishing when St. Paul lived there in 58 A.D. Towering over the crest of the hill on which it stands, the old cathedral attracts special attention. This sacred edifice is one of the most ancient in Christendom, as it is in part the church dedicated by St. Paul himself on the site where he performed his first miracle on that island. Among the many objects of interest contained therein is a painting of the Madonna by St. Luke who accompanied St. Paul; also a tall silver cross brought from Rhodes by the Knights of St. John and said to be the one carried into Jerusalem by the leader of the first crusade.

Hardly had the new foundation been established in Malta, when Mother Emilie received an unexpected call to the home of her childhood. Her father was seriously ill, and with all possible speed she hastened to visit him. A spiritual writer* remarks that of all the unfounded delusions in regard to a religious vocation, that which is most ridiculously untrue is the notion that it hardens the

*Fr. M. Russel.

heart, dulls the affections and lessens the love for kindred and friends. It has an effect directly opposite. None are less liable than nuns to the reproach St. Paul levelled against certain pagans that they were *sine affectione*, without affection.

It may be safely asserted that Mother Emilie was not liable to this reproach. But while doing her utmost to soothe the sufferings of her father, the care of his soul was her chief concern. In a letter to Father Bourgade she said: "We spoke to him about making the necessary preparation for death and he replied immediately, 'For some days I have been thinking of that duty, let a priest be called in.' At present he is suffering very much, so I hasten to end my brief note to you, as I wish to be constantly near him. . ." A little later she added, "You will be pleased to know that I have had the happiness of seeing him receive the last Sacraments with faith and piety. . ." This was written on the 28th April 1846. The next night, at eleven, the Baron de Vialar passed away. . .

After an illness from which her father had recovered, about three years previously, Mother Emilie wrote to him from Tunis saying that she was free from all anxiety regarding his health, as Sister Victorine had informed

her that he had resumed his walks in the neighbourhood of Gaillac. Then, after dwelling on other matters she says: "During the last few weeks of my sojourn here, I was very sad at not getting any news from you. Now Almighty God has turned my anxiety into joy, by the happy tidings of your recovery. With every assurance of my most tender affection, I remain, your loving child—Emilie de Vialar."

And now, at the final parting, Mother Emilie is again soothed and comforted. In the calm and silent sorrow of her bereavement, she was full of gratitude to the kind Providence that afforded her the opportunity of fulfilling the last sad duties of filial affection. . .

The funeral obsequies were hardly over when the Foundress received distressing news relative to money matters. This communication marks the beginning of a series of events which would have ruined the Congregation, were it not God's own work and, therefore, under His protecting care. These events will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. The more interesting and agreeable subject of development still claims our attention here.

The convents in the regency of Tunis, in the Near East, in Malta, are all so many proofs of the good effected by the zealous efforts of

the past. And now, in the midst of gathering clouds, an invitation comes from the fields afar, even from India beyond the Ganges. It will be remembered that, at the age of eighteen, Mother Emilie made a solemn promise of daily prayer to St. Francis Xavier, the great Apostle of the East; moreover, she was also attracted in a special manner to the Church of the Fathers of the Foreign Missions. Though encouraged by the remembrance of these incidents of her early life, she did not look on them as certain indications of the designs of Providence. On the contrary, she said in the correspondence of this period, "I leave it to our Blessed Lord to make choice of the places where my Sisters are to work for Him; all our foundations may be said to be the result of circumstances truly providential." The call to the East may be mentioned as a striking instance.

During her sojourn in Malta, Mother Emilie made the acquaintance of Don Bruno, a missionary from Burma, who was ardently desirous of obtaining the help of the Sisters of St. Joseph for the labours of his apostolate. He made known his desires to Mother Emilie who had long cherished the idea of sending her children to the missionary field under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier. The unex-

pected meeting with this priest seemed to her as an indication of a call divine. Nevertheless, she waited for still clearer manifestations of the designs of God. Mgr. Ceretti, the vicar apostolic of Burma, endorsed the appeal of Don Bruno, by most earnestly entreating the Mother Foundress to send some of her Sisters to his mission. This apeal was made in 1846 and the Sisters set out for this field of labour in the year 1847.

In the correspondence of one of the Sisters who formed the community at Gaillac at that period, we read: "During the hour of recreation our venerated Mother asked us who wished to go to the Burma Mission. Of the twenty nuns then present all declared themselves willing to go, all with the exception of one who said that she considered herself unworthy of this great privilege. Six were chosen, and, to the great joy of our beloved Mother, they made the sacrifice gladly and willingly. When they were preparing for the journey she said, 'I look on the Sisters that I am sending to the Indies as very holy souls, and am confident that their zeal and self-sacrifice will merit a great reward.'" The details of their journey are amongst the most interesting records in the annals of the Congregation. The Suez Canal had not yet

been constructed, so the Sisters were obliged to traverse the desert from Alexandria to Suez. They were young and inexperienced travellers, but He who had been obliged to pass through the desert when fleeing from the vengeance of Herod, did not fail to protect those who were prepared to endure the pain and privations of voluntary exile, for His sake. During a break in their journey, the Sisters were accosted by a number of fierce-looking individuals who seemed to be about to attack them or take possession of their belongings. In this extremity, a venerable looking old man appeared in their midst all on a sudden, and said, "Fear nothing, my dear children, I am here to protect you." The brigands dispersed leaving them unharmed, but their protector continued to watch over them, coming to their assistance each time that their vehicle stopped and always greeting them with the self-same words: "Fear not my children, I am here to protect you." These kind attentions were continued until they went on board the ship at Suez where their good friend took leave of them in a most affectionate manner, saying, "Adieu my children, I wish you a safe journey," and once again addressing them with the oft-repeated "Fear nothing I am still your protector," he disappeared.

At that moment, like the disciples of Emmaus, their eyes seemed to be opened. As the boat moved away from the shore, the Sisters cast questioning glances one at the other. Each one felt firmly convinced that they had actually been favoured with the companionship and protection of the foster father of Jesus, the good St. Joseph, their own special patron and protector. The Mother Foundress was deeply touched with the joyful tidings of this event, also by an account of the warm reception given to her children on their arrival in Moulmein—the scene of their future labours. In a letter dated 18th June 1847, Sister Teresa Mackenzie, writing from Burma, said, "We were given a most cordial welcome by the Catholics of Moulmein. On our arrival we paid a visit to the church of the mission accompanied by Father Balma and the other missionaries. At the church door a number of little orphans awaited us. After singing the Te Deum we repaired to the mission house prepared for us."

Moulmein was, in those days, the chief town of Lower Burma, so that the convent drew large numbers of pupils and the zeal and devotedness of the Sisters soon raised it to a foremost rank amongst the schools of the

ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT GARDEN, MOULMEIN

province. This was a great consolation to their venerable Mother, who, when bidding them adieu, said, "Go, my dear children, and do all the good you can, according to the opportunities afforded you."

The Mother Foundress was immersed in a sea of troubles at this period, so she was obliged to pay another visit to the Eternal City. Pius IX had just been enthroned in the chair of Peter. Mother Emilie was accompanied on this occasion by her immediate successor as Superior General of the Congregation. In a letter addressed to her father, this religious gives the following account of their audience with the Sovereign Pontiff: "On the day of our arrival, Reverend Mother, Sister Marguerite and myself were admitted to a special audience with the new pope. How can I describe the impression of the solemn moment when we found ourselves actually in the presence of Christ's own Vicar? I was deeply touched on seeing the gracious manner in which His Holiness listened to all that Mother Emilie had to say to him. It is no exaggeration to assert that he was kindness itself. Turning to Sister Marguerite and myself, he asked if we had been in Algeria. . . How His Holiness then encouraged our Mother to continue her work,

saying, 'I bless you and all your undertakings, as well as the members of your Institute.' At that moment I felt that my soul was inundated with joy. We were allowed to kiss the Pope's ring, a favour which is not allowed except to great personages. When my turn came, I clasped the hand of the Pontiff while kissing the ring, so my companions told me afterwards, for I was really not aware of what I was about. In that saintly presence I was so struck with the dignity almost divine, the gentleness, simplicity and homeliness manifested to us, that I was overcome with emotion. . ."

Mother Emilie looked on this audience with the Vicar of Christ as a special blessing from heaven. If it did not serve to alleviate present troubles, it was a grand guarantee that her work was the work of God. Thus sustained and encouraged she entered on another period of dire distress.

The difficulties and trials of the past had come chiefly from ecclesiastical superiors, from whom she had a right to expect support and encouragement. In the troubles now awaiting her, she is the victim of deceit and injustice of co-labourers and others whom she had regarded as the most trustworthy of friends. From sad experience must she now

realize that the enemy within the gates is ever the more dangerous foe. But just as those who would find the gold and precious stones of joy must first dig into the depths of sorrow, "as it is the gloom which maketh beautiful the light of the morning and imparts to the new day something of the gladness of a resurrection," so also the dark and gloomy night of trouble which now commenced for this servant of God, under His protecting hand, would bring her a bright morrow of heavenly favours and blessings. It would also, by the help of His grace, enable her to acquire that true joyousness of the heart which is independent of all the sad vicissitudes of this nether world.

It will be seen that to Mother Emilie may be aptly applied what Thomas à Kempis says of those who enjoy familiar friendship with Jesus. "In seasons of darkness, they will not be dejected nor despair, but stand with an even mind, resigned to the will of God, and bear, for the glory of His divine Son, whatsoever shall befall them."

CHAPTER VII

DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Because I felt the largeness of a little loss,
I went to see my Saviour hanging on His Cross.

"Suffering is necessary; there is no choice; but whether to suffer well or ill, whether after the manner of the elect or after that of the reprobate, whether for thy sanctification or for thy condemnation, this is optional with thee, this, my child, depends upon thy choice. . ."
Imitation of the Sacred Heart, Book III, Ch. 2.

AFTER a period of furious hostilities, St. Teresa declared that the extraordinary joy she experienced in her persecutions, came from the conviction that, since creatures were repaying her thus, Almighty God would reward her abundantly. In a holy transport of unbounded faith and confidence, the saint cried out, "Thou alone, Oh my God, Thou alone art unchangeable." In circumstances somewhat similar, Mother Emilie wrote to her spiritual daughters: "Fear nothing, my poor children, be sure that God will not abandon our Congregation. He alone is the Disposer of all things. Instead of giving way to

anxiety, let it be your chief aim and endeavour to acquire the spirit of your vocation."

The events referred to may be looked upon as the last stations in her way of the Cross, for, as will be seen in this chapter, the servant of God was drawing to her "Calvary."

In the history of many of the great pioneer labourers in the good cause, we find that obstacles and hindrances are not infrequently met with at the hands of those who should have been their best and most loyal supporters. To mention but a few instances: In the life of St. John Baptist de la Salle, it is said that his own relations and religious brethren joined with strangers in a chorus of criticism. Dom Bosco had experiences somewhat similar. As for St. Sophie Barat, the Foundress of the religious of the Sacred Heart, there are records in her biography which seem to be so many reminders of the promise, "I will reign in spite of the malice of my enemies."

The following brief account of the events of about five years (1846-1851) in the life of Mother Emilie de Vialar, shows that, in her case, too, the same sad fact is exemplified. When, in accordance with the consitutions of the Congregation, she herself had been elected Superior General, a religious named Sister Pauline was appointed Assistant General and

Superior of the central house of the Congregation in Gaillac. The history of her administration is a lamentable tale of deceit and abuse of power; but it may not be suppressed.

A large portion of the fortune that Mother Emilie inherited on the death of her mother, had been reserved for the needs of the Congregation. At this particular period Mother Emilie was obliged to go on long and tedious journeys in connection with new foundations or houses recently established. During her absence, the financial affairs of the Institute were in the hands of a lawyer, the chaplain of the convent and Sister Pauline. This trio used to meet so frequently that people in the neighbourhood of the Mother House used to wonder what they had to talk about. Now, at a time when the income was more than sufficient for current expenses, Mother Emilie was called on to pay a debt of a hundred thousand francs. Writing to a friend about this affair she said: "On my return to Gaillac, seeing that my fortune had disappeared and not knowing how it had been disposed of, I proceeded to make enquiries in a friendly manner. But all to no purpose. I could get no information whatever, either from Sister Pauline or from the lawyer. However, I managed to get possession of the account books and registers;

these had been tampered with and some important papers were missing. Sister Pauline was evidently under the influence of evil counsel, for she persisted in refusing to give me any information. When pressed to do her duty in this matter, she asked to be allowed to go on a visit to her relations. I tried to make her understand that she was bound in conscience to remain with me and help to find out what had become of the missing funds. She promised to do so and asked permission to spend only a few days with her people in the country. The permission was granted; she left; but instead of returning she sent me a lawyer's letter, a sort of legal quibble purporting to establish a claim on the legacy I was about to inherit from my father."

It will be remembered that on the occasion of her first Communion Mother Emilie received the grace of utter detestation of the smallest fault against the fair virtue of truthfulness. From that time onwards, she was distinguished by a frank sincerity and openness of soul. With these qualities were blended the sweetness, gentleness and charity that were characteristic of the Good Master; so that, even when there was question of deceit and treachery, she was ready to pardon and to shield the wrongdoer as far as possible. Thus

when writing about the sad dilemma into which she was thrust by her associates in the good work, she said: "As for the chaplain, I am inclined to think he is not responsible; it seems to me that the legal administrator did not fully inform him of all his own manœuvring." So, too, in regard to Sister Pauline, every effort was made to win her back to the right path. Seeing that compassion, kindness and sympathy were unavailing, Mother Emilie tried at least to save the name of her poor misguided spiritual daughter; but her charitable designs were overruled. The ecclesiastical authorities of the diocese made a formal enquiry into the state of affairs in the convent. It is needless to dwell upon the intrigues and false accusations of her opponents, suffice it to say that those appointed to conduct the enquiry failed to see that Mother Emilie had truth and justice on her side.

Now when all earthly goods have been renounced in quest of the ideal indicated by our Blessed Lord, "Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me," even their total loss is a matter of small moment, if but a personal concern; but in this case, other questions were involved. Many

of the Sisters had made this complete renunciation; was not the Foundress in duty bound to support them? Her work had been approved by the Vicar of Christ; was she not under the sacred obligation of continuing it? As for the appeal of the poor and the suffering, did it not prove irresistible even in early youth, and, at this period, it might be said that her heart overflowed with the charity of Jesus? Again, was she not bound to convince the ecclesiastical authorities of the justice of her cause? Moreover, attempts had been made to encroach on her rights as inheritrix after the death of her father; if these attempts were not frustrated, the material ruin of her Institute was inevitable. All these considerations induced Mother Emilie to take legal measure to secure her rights; affairs in connection with the family estates had not yet been settled after the death of the Baron de Vialar; but Mother Emilie knew that a large amount had been bequeathed to her. By means of this new inheritance she could recover all that had been misappropriated, secure the triumph of justice and safeguard her possessions for the future. So it seemed. But alas! her efforts, if viewed from a human standpoint, resulted in what may be termed a series of crushing calamities.

In the first hearing of the case an attempt was made to force the lawyer to give an account of his administration. Other trials followed, in which, of necessity, Dame Pauline was implicated. The proceedings dragged on from the month of June 1846 until the month of January 1851. Well might it be said that during those weary years of turmoil the poor Foundress looked around for some one to comfort her and found none. She was actually placed under a sort of ban by the ecclesiastical authorities. Her privations have been referred to in the correspondence of her niece, Madame Brusley. Writing to a friend in the month of August 1880, she says: "You can well imagine the great sufferings that my Aunt Emilie was obliged to endure, when prevented from receiving the Sacraments in her own diocese. Many a time and oft have I seen her come to my father's home (a distance of forty kilometers from the town of Gaillac), and that journey was made even in the piercing cold of winter, the sole object of her visit being to secure the help and consolation afforded by Holy Communion . . ."

In the archives of the Congregation there are detailed accounts of the legal proceedings; and the following brief extracts will suffice to

give an idea of what Mother Emilie endured in the course of that prolonged struggle.

Announcing the result of one of the trials her Advocate addressed her thus: "You have, I presume, been already informed about the decision of the court. I pleaded with the conviction which only an absolute sense of right can inspire. In fact I can assert that I had never been so impressed with the righteousness of a cause. However, we failed. . ."

Writing to Father Bourgade on the same subject, Mother Emilie herself said: "Nothing could appear more extraordinary than that which happened at Toulouse. I had all that was most just and honourable on my side. The judgement had been passed in my favour and the sentence actually written. The president arose followed by his councillors, when one of them retracted his verdict, with the result that my opponents had it all their own way."

In the course of these proceedinns the Foundress was obliged to stand face to face with one who had been her co-labourer, confidant and trusted friend . . . now an apostate and the most inveterate of her enemies. But neither personal hostility, misrepresentation of deeds and words, nor any other outrage could provoke the slightest sign

of retaliation, or of any other sentiment unworthy of the Christian ladyhood of the true religious. . . When the legal enactments came to an end, *all* was lost, time, fortune, property, all but peace of soul and trust in Providence.

Not satisfied with their triumph in regard to material things, her opponents made an attempt at crushing the convent by opening a rival establishment in the same town. Some of the Sisters, thinking that their work could not long survive such hostility, were persuaded to go over to the opposing camp, or rather to halt between two sides. After rendering service to the rival work during the day, they returned to their own convent in the evening. Now this step had been taken during the absence of the Mother General and without even consulting her. Such a state of affairs could not be tolerated, so these rebellious members were dismissed from the Institute.

"All the Sisters are gone! The convent is broken up, completely ruined!" Such were the comments of the townspeople. As a matter of fact, the defaulters were eleven in number; but those who remained supported their Mother Foundress fearlessly and faithfully, in one word with a loyalty that was truly admirable.

One who was ardently attached to our Blessed Lord remarked that "the Almighty Father granted His beloved Son three companions. The first was Poverty—perfect, continual, complete: the second, Humiliation —perfect, continual, complete: the third, Suffering—perfect, continual, complete." Now those who have entered His service must, of necessity, come into contact with these three companions of Jesus. The strange conditions have been accepted time and again, and those who have cheerfully borne the burden would have us profit by their experiences. They would have us bear in mind that "Poverty, privation, grief, sorrow, pain, every suffering, whatever its nature or its name, may be changed by the will of the sufferer, with the unfailing help of God's grace, into an occasion for virtue and a stepping-stone to a higher level of grace and perfection, even into a rich source of merit and of eternal happiness and joy. Can it be said that Mother Emilie belongs to the rank of these inspiring leaders? Let us hear her speak from the fullness of her heart to her guide and director in far-distant Carthage. After recounting the details of her material losses she wrote: "As for moral sufferings, I can assure you that they are not wanting. Here in this town I look around me

for some sign or token of sympathy or encouragement, but I find none. But never did I turn to God with so much confidence. In fact, my trust in His fatherly care goes on increasing in proportion to my afflictions. I enjoy a profound peace of soul even in the midst of my agonizing experiences. The love of God amply compensates for the pleasure or sense of security afforded by material prosperity."

Is not this on a par with the spirit of detachment of the great St. Francis of Sales? It is related that, on a certain occasion, the senate of Savoy had passed a decree authorizing a local magnate to take possession of his estates. The good bishop was in no way perturbed. With the calm serenity habitual to him, he simply remarked, "Well, if they deprive me of all things temporal, they will make me wholly spiritual."

Again let us listen to Mother Emilie in conversation with her own Sisters. When things were at their worst in the troubles of this period, they expressed their astonishment on seeing her not only calm and resigned, but even cheerful and happy. "If I had not become poor," she said, "I could not have established our Congregation. It could not have called down the blessings of Heaven.

All must be marked with the saving sign—the sign of the Cross. Let us thank God for His graces and let us put all our trust in Him. It is for His sake that we have given up everything. Let us then rely on His promises; be sure, my dear Sisters, be quite sure, that He will not fail to keep His word."

If the tiniest acts of virtue are so pleasing in the sight of God that they draw down many graces and blessings, how pleasing in His sight must be the heroic virtues of His faithful servants and how abundant their reward! But alas! it not infrequently happens that human weakness and human depravity give occasion for the practice of these virtues. This sad fact is exemplified in the case of Emilie de Vialar. While we can make no attempt either at excuse or palliation, might it not be well to bear in mind that such troubles represent a phase in the history of the Church which calls for special notice! The prophetic warning of its Divine Founder has been verified time and again. "It must needs be that scandal cometh." Those appointed to guide and guard the faithful have been ever on the alert in regard to this danger.

A distinguished prelate* of our own times has treated this subject in a manner especially

*Cardinal Bourne. Sermon at the Servite Church, London.

applicable to the regrettable events of our biography. Let us consider these events in the light of his teaching.

After stating the importance of studying the history of the Church, if we are to "understand aright the dealings of Almighty God with His creatures," this prelate says: "But while the study is so important that no one, according to his opportunities, should ever fail to make himself acquainted to some extent with that history, it carries with it certain dangers and difficulties that we can only deal with properly if we ground ourselves on two clear and definite principles.

"When we look upon this history, we find to our amazement that there are many things that we must deplore, that many mistakes have been made, that there has been much wickedness even in high places. And, just as in childhood and when we are growing up we are shocked to find faults and flaws in the characters of those whom we love and revere, so we are shocked to the point of scandal to be brought face to face in the Catholic Church—the Spouse of Christ, founded by Him without blemish—with episodes which may sometimes be explained to a certain extent, but which can never be wholly excused.

"'Behold they that serve Him are not steadfast, and in His angels He found wickedness: How much more shall they that dwell in houses of clay, who have an earthly foundation, be consumed as with the moth' (Job). Continuing, this teacher reminds us of the words of our Lord Himself. 'It must needs be that scandals come, but woe to him through whom they come.'

"The first fact, the first principle we must bear in mind is that God has bestowed upon intelligent beings the gift of free will. Their service is a free service. It is attracted, it is guided, it is assisted; but it is never compelled. Because men may freely turn to right, and no less freely turn to wrong, it is inevitable that there should be scandals in the world. Free will is the source of our merit, because our good acts come from our free choice, hence they become deserving of praise in the eyes of our Creator. But that free will is no less the source of shortcomings, of failure, of sin. Given free will, there is always the possibility of wrongdoing, there is always the possibility of scandal. So it has been from the beginning.

"The book of Job reminds us of the fall of the angels and with poor human creatures scandal is more likely to happen, for there are

ever arrayed against us the strongest forces that affect the wills of men. The history of mankind is one long history of failure, one scandal after another, the leading one being the fall of Judas. We cannot understand the fall of Judas, considering his close contact with our Divine Master; but his fall is sufficient to take away the possibility of ever being scandalized in reading the history of the Church.

"So it was that in the Middle Ages, when the Christian faith and the Christian code of morals had received almost universal acceptance, the mingling of Church and State generated new scandals which sullied the fair face of the bride of Christ. The period of the 'Reformation' furnished many sad instances. Coming nearer to our own times we have that epoch which culminated with the French Revolution, the effects of which are still felt amongst us. There was denial of all religion, scandal after scandal, and even those who ought to have been leaders and guides were more than once found wanting.

"We have to face facts. We cannot shut our eyes to them, and those who teach in our schools, as they prepare children for their passage through life, should never attempt to deny the existence of short-comings, yet,

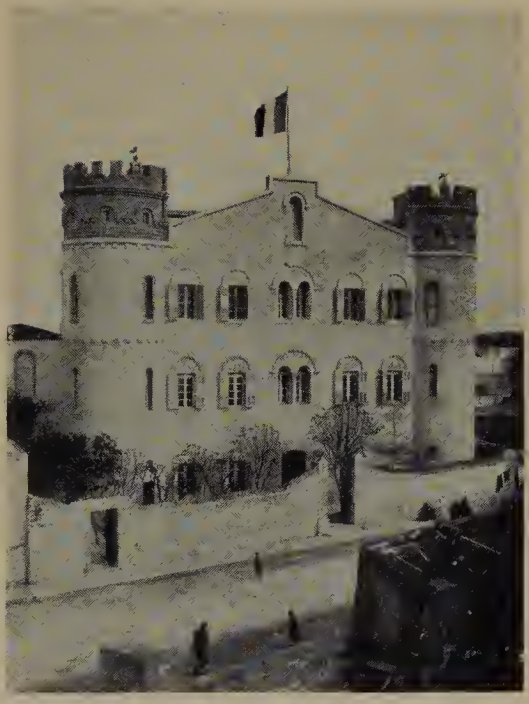
at the same time, they should take every care to prevent them from being a source of scandal by explaining their cause and putting them in the proper setting." In concluding, this prelate lays stress on another fact which we must ever bear in mind. "In the midst of these inevitable failings, God is ever present in His Church. There is always the grace of salvation working in the Church, waiting only to be tended and cultivated, so that it may grow into an immense force that will overcome sin, remove scandal and thus show forth the Church in all the strength of her majesty and power."

* * * * * *

It is gratifying to note that God was thus present with the Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph. By a most remarkable coincidence, it was during the bitter trials and persecutions referred to in this chapter that a most important field of labour was assigned to her Institute. In the month of June 1846 the legal proceedings commenced at Gaillac; in the very same year a number of Sisters left Malta to open a new convent in Beyrout. The mission was prepared for them by Fathers of the Society of Jesus under the direction of the Propaganda. This was but a prelude to a

still more important development in that neighbourhood. The Custodian of the Holy Places in Jerusalem visited Beyrout and informed the Sisters that the Propaganda had assigned to them yet another field of labour, the field which was chosen by our Blessed Lord Himself. It is easy to imagine the keen interest, the sentiments of joy and gratitude with which the Mother General received tidings from her Sisters in those parts.

In the course of their journey thither the following letter was written in the town of Jaffa: "We have been here for the past eight days. Quite unexpectedly we met the Custodian of the Holy Places and he advised us to rest for a while after our voyage. Besides, he wished us to see the beautiful convent that is being erected for us in this sea-port. Jerusalem and Jaffa are not the only places in Palestine in which we are to be established. The Custodian tells us that he intends to place our Sisters in Bethlehem, in Nazareth and perhaps in Rameleh." About a month later the same Sister, in writing to her father, said: "On the eve of the feast of the Assumption, at half past five in the morning—which was still the hour of repose for you—we were actually at the gates of Jerusalem. On arriving in the Holy City, our first care was to



CONVENT AT JAFFA

ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT, JERUSALEM

assist at the Sacrifice of the Mass in a spirit of thanksgiving. The Patriarch of Jerusalem wished to see us. When we called on him, we were received with the greatest kindness. His Lordship is dignified in bearing, but very simple and homely." The Sisters also said that they took part in the solemn procession to the Holy Sepulchre, that they visited the grotto of the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemanie and the tomb of the Blessed Virgin.

As regards their mission they informed Mother Emilie that they were progressing very favourably. They opened a dispensary for the poor—a work of charity which was greatly appreciated. Their schools were well attended and their pupils afforded them great consolation. There are houses of their Congregation in divers parts of the Holy Land to-day. "Is it not," says Canon Picard,* "a special privilege to be called to these parts in order to teach the sublime lessons that were first taught here by the good Master Himself? This privilege is yours, good Sisters of St. Joseph. You can say to your pupils, 'There is the poor little cave that the Lord of the Universe chose for His birthplace. His sacred feet have touched the pathway on which we now walk. Again,

*Writer of a biography of E. de Vialar.

this is the place where He was seen to shed bitter tears on beholding the city that did not know what was for its peace; this the grotto of the Agony where His soul was sorrowful even unto death.' Such is the lively impression of that Divine Presence that one is more inclined to say He is still with us, actually present in person, than that He has been here. Glancing around in the neighbourhood, the same sacred associations may be said to cling to mountain, hill and dale. Do not the shores of Galilee, the corn fields, the fig trees all recall His Presence and the condescending love which induced Him to come and dwell amongst us? . . ."

The progress and prosperity of the work in this field of labour was indeed a source of inestimable consolation to Mother Emilie. That she was really in need of some such consolation and encouragement will be seen from the episodes of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOTHER HOUSE

"Be not dismayed at life; 'tis still the mode of God
with His elect.
Their hopes exactly to fulfil, in times and ways they
least expect."

WHILE the apostolate of the Sisters was developing in a manner so marvellous that it seemed to be visibly blessed by Heaven, their efforts at the central house in Gaillac were so vehemently opposed, so thwarted and hindered on all sides, that the Foundress was obliged to seek another harbour of refuge.

At the beginning of her struggle for the rights of the Congregation, Mother Emilie had hoped that her new inheritance would enable her to recover the large amount so unjustly withheld. We have seen the result. And now, in spite of the depressing effects ascribed to "hope deferred," we find her buoyed up with the expectation that Toulouse being the scene of her material losses, would also become the scene of her spiritual triumph. Accordingly, she requested permission from the arch-

bishop of that city to establish the Mother House and Novitiate under his jurisdiction. Her petition was not granted. However, like the sorely-tried creature of the Gospel, who was undaunted by rebuffs and repeated refusals, Mother Emilie made another attempt, humbly pleading for simple toleration of their presence in the episcopal city. This met with a more favourable hearing.

"Greater calamities will befall her in Toulouse than those she had fled from in her native town." Such was the prediction of her enemies. But Mother Emilie was undismayed by threats. Having no other end in view than that of saving her Institute she was firmly convinced that, in His own good time, Almighty God would bless her efforts. In the face of opposition and prejudice, she managed to establish her convent in Toulouse and with a heart full of gratitude she made the following record of the event: "We are settled in our new house here. Everything is in good order. The Novitiate is separated from the main building and our chapel has been fitted up with the ornaments, etc., that we brought from our first convent in Gaillac. The rule is well observed, especially in regard to silence. The Vicar General seems to be convinced that the powers of darkness have

assailed us in vain, so at present he supports and encourages us in many ways."

We are assured by our holy faith that Almighty God gives His faithful servants, especially those who have suffered pain, bitterness and sorrow, a recompense such as only a God of infinite resources can bestow. However, it was not His will that Mother Emilie should partake of these blessings in the new establishment in Toulouse; on the contrary, it was here that she reached the culminating point in her way of the Cross. The Vicar General realized that her work was really deserving of support, but, hardly had the Sisters begun to enjoy the benefit of his co-operation and sympathy, when he was taken from them by the hand of death.

His successor examined the statutes of the Institute and proposed changes in regard to fundamental points of the rule. Mother Emilie replied to him in the following terms: "Fourteen years of incessant tribulations have served to enlighten me as to what is necessary for the spiritual welfare of the Congregation, and, consequently, I cannot accept such radical changes as you propose to make. May God forbid that, for the sake of momentary peace and tranquillity, I should weakly submit to what I know to be detrimental to the

Institute. Humbly asking your blessing I trust you will become the promoter and protector of our work. . ."

But God's hour had not come as yet.

It is probable about this epoch in the life of Mother Emilie that the interview took place which gave occasion for the following pen-portrait: "I was acquainted with Emilie de Vialar in the days of my youth, but for many a long year circumstances prevented me from seeing her. The angelic expression of her countenance made such an impression on me that I always looked forward to the pleasure of meeting her once again. Well, to my great joy, we did meet. Having heard of her losses, trials and disappointments, I expected to see her crushed and broken-spirited, but, to my great astonishment, I found her even more attractive than in early life. Her words were still expressive of the same sweetness, gentleness and kindness, in brief, the most marked characteristics of her countenance seemed to be a calmness and serenity truly celestial. In my recollections of this meeting, I always associated her with those mountain climbers who have attained the elevated regions where tempests are unknown and skies are always clear and brilliant."

In this appreciation, the writer, Mademoi-

selle de Tonnac, goes no further than outward signs of grace and virtue; but those who were more intimately acquainted with Mother Emilie, knew the secret of her fortitude. When first attracted to follow in the footsteps of the Good Master, He manifested to her His five sacred wounds in a visible manner. Mother Emilie daily recited five Paters, Aves and Glorias in gratitude for this favour. It was in these sources of grace that she found the strength and courage that enabled her to persevere with indomitable heart in the face of personal hostility and constant misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

It has been well said that "the human heart has never had a cross to bear that our Blessed Lord has not first personally experienced and borne on His own shoulders. The bitter chalice of personal jealousy and rancour growing into murderous hatred, He drank to the last dregs, for apparently in the end His enemies triumphed over Him. He, the gentle and gracious Christ, who would not quench the smoking flax nor crush the bruised reed, what treatment did He not receive at the hands of His implacable foes? How they watched Him with cruel hard eyes that betrayed the hostility which burned in their hearts. Nothing that He said or did was

right. They belittled and slandered Him, subjected Him and His poor disciples to a constant petty persecution. . ."

Has not the same Lord told us in the plainest of terms that He is the Way that we must follow? In obeying this injunction there were no half measures in the case of Emilie de Vialar. To a member of her Institute she writes: "Notwithstanding all the troubles and disappointments of the past, it is only here in Toulouse that I realized the meaning of the self-immolation implied in my religious vows. Just as the holy bishop and martyr St. Ignatius, while being conducted to Rome, to be devoured by wild beasts, declared it was only then he began to feel that He was a Christian, so, recalling to mind the glorious testimony thus rendered to our holy faith, I can say, "only now do I feel I am a religious. . ."

To another friend she writes: "I beg of you to pray that no evil may befall us which would seriously affect the Congregation. With the help of God's grace we have been able to observe our rules up to the present, but we are now subjected to very rude attacks, and so we need very special help from Heaven. . ."

On the occasion when the Patriarch of

Jerusalem paid a visit to France, Mother Emilie wrote to the Superior of the Foreign Missions in Paris, begging him to plead her cause with this illustrious dignitary of the Church. The following reply was received: "I can assure you that it was quite unnecessary for me to recommend you or your Sisterhood to the Patriarch. His Excellency favoured us with a visit and ere I had time to mention your name, of his own accord he spoke in terms the most appreciative, of the good done by your Sisters in Cyprus and in different parts of Palestine. Now this eulogium is all the more noteworthy because the Patriarch was unaware that I have the privilege of being acquainted with you." However, this ray of hope in the midst of the gloom did not change conditions in her immediate surroundings. For a period of wellnigh five years, the struggle continued in Toulouse, then once again the Foundress was obliged to seek safety by flight.

An application to the Bishop of Rodez was favourably received; but this ecclesiastic would have only one Novitiate for the whole Congregation... One who was similarly tried used to repeat over and over again the inspiring words of the Psalmist, "In Thee, O Lord have I hoped, let me never be confounded."

On a certain occasion, when applying this sublime sentiment to her own particular needs, she prayed thus: "My God and my Father, I cannot believe otherwise than this: when You shut one door on Your poor children, Your fatherly heart will urge You to open another." Mother Emilie was grateful to the Bishop of Rodez, but her convents being in divers parts of the world, she could not comply with his wishes in regard to the Novitiate. She then addressed a petition to the head of the diocese of Marseilles, Mgr. de Mazenod. Here at last her efforts were crowned with success.

In the month of August 1852 Mother Emilie and her companions directed their steps towards that great seaport in the south of France. They were most cordially received by the Bishop who was himself the founder of a Congregation. Saintly souls understand one another. It is said that the calm, sorrow-stamped face and the lofty and noble mind of St. Jane de Chantal attracted the attention of St. Francis of Sales, and that she, on her side, looked up with reverence to her new guide, finding in him every day a greater range of spiritual knowledge, a deeper foundation of virtue and a greater perfection of that charity which filled his whole being with an

indescribable charm. The same might be said of Mgr. de Mazenod, the saintly prelate who was destined by Providence to support and encourage Mother Emilie de Vialar.

* * * * * *

Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod was born on the 1st of August 1782, fifteen years previous to Mother Emilie. From his tenderest years his piety and prayerfulness edified his household. He was not to remain long in the peace and shelter of his ancestral home. The political feuds of the time wrought widespread ruin; at the age of seven he saw his house sacked and his father fleeing to escape the decree of arrest issued by Mirabeau. For twelve years he lived in exile with his father, now at Turin, then at Naples, Venice, and again at Palermo.

When Charles de Mazenod returned to France as a young man, his refined manners and beautiful character impressed those around him. His virtue and piety had grown with increasing years and the yearning of his heart to enter the Sanctuary grew ever stronger; statesmen and courtiers urged him to serve at Court. Portalis, Napoleon's powerful minister, offered him an appointment; the papal legate, Cardinal Caprara, pressed him to

accept it. Providence, however, guided his steps and all these plans fell through. Mgr. de Mazenod hastened to obey the divine call and entered the Seminary of St. Sulpice to study for the priesthood.

After his ordination, when his bishop, Mgr. Jouffret, asked him what work he would like, the true priestly spirit of Father de Mazenod was shown in his answer, "I am ready for anything, but if you give me the choice, I wish to spend my life in educating youth and in the service of the poor."

Father de Mazenod's sphere of work and influence soon spread and he felt the need of helpers. Thus quite imperceptibly, like all divine works, even the formation of the apostolic college, a new Congregation was inaugurated. At first two disciples came and started their formation; more joined and a little community was formed, which elected Father de Mazenod as Superior; the community grew in numbers till it was necessary to formulate a body of rules. Father de Mazenod recoiled before the task, realizing now that the heavy burden and responsibility of a founder was to be laid upon him. But the good of souls and God's glory urged him to undertake the task.

On the 2nd of November 1818, the Congre-

gation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was founded; for, on that day, his first vows were pronounced. Eight years later the Congregation received papal approbation. Thenceforward the zeal of the Oblates was not to be confined to one town, it spread all over France, it extended itself to Corsica, to Switzerland, to England, Ireland and Scotland. The Oblates were soon to be found in Natal, the Transvaal, and Zululand. The Congregation had become a world-wide force with its centre at Marseilles in a meek humble priest, Father de Mazenod.

On the episcopal see falling vacant, Father de Mazenod was appointed Bishop of Marseilles. His attention was immediately turned to the reorganization of the diocese and the spiritual good of his people. This additional work did not in anyway lessen his control over his Congregation. His vast zeal had but a wider scope.

Mgr. de Mazenod laid the foundation of that magnificent cathedral which stands sentinel over the Mediterranean; he undertook the reconstruction of the Church of Notre Dame de la Garde. His pen was ever active in the interest of Church and State; his sermons stimulated the people to the worship of God. The cardinalate was to have crowned his

work ; but God chose for him another reward, a reward everlasting and a crown of glory which never fades. His death was as his life, edifying. His last advice to the priests and Oblates gathered round his deathbed was a precious legacy: "Foster brotherly love amongst yourselves and a burning zeal for the salvation of souls." With the invocation, "O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary!" he passed away. It was the month of our Lady (21st May, 1861) Mary was to lead the founder of the Oblates to heaven. "After this our exile, shew unto us the blessed fruit of Thy womb, Jesus."

Such was the saintly prelate under whose guidance and fatherly care the Sisterhood of St. Joseph entered on a new era of progress and prosperity. If the consciousness of new power be one of the most stimulating things in life, the following records serve as a proof that the statement is verified in regard to "new power" of doing good. Mother Emilie and her companions were in need of many things during their first days in Marseilles, but their hearts were elated with a sense of holy joy and gladness. "On the evening of our arrival," they wrote, "we took our repast seated on the floor surrounded by boxes and packages. The menu consisted of but two courses, boiled potatoes and a morsel of dry bread: but we

were far happier than if the most sumptuous banquet were spread out before us. Was there not still greater poverty in the stable of Bethlehem?"

Full of gratitude and joy Mother Emilie herself hastened to inform the Sisters on the different missions, of the great blessings with which they were favoured in their new harbour of refuge.

The following letter on this subject is dated September the 6th, 1852: "We have established our new headquarters in Marseilles, or rather we have been conducted here by the hand of Divine Providence. His fatherly care, which has never been wanting to us at any time nor under any circumstances however trying, has been especially evident in connection with recent events. Dear Sisters, we are very happy here. His Lordship is exceedingly kind to us. Now, since you share our happiness, should you not take upon yourselves the pleasant duty of sending him a word of thanks? Do tell him that you are well pleased to have the Congregation under his protection here in his episcopal city. . . I know you will be glad to hear that the fresh air of this place has renewed my strength. Here I can take long walks, a thing that was impossible in Toulouse.

"Our work is greatly appreciated both by the clergy and the people. His Lordship is keenly interested in all that concerns us and wishes to have our Sisters for the missions conducted by the Oblate Fathers. He has already spoken of the island of Ceylon. A foundation there would give me great pleasure indeed, as it would form a connecting link with our Sisters in far-distant Moulmein."

The hard struggles of the past seem now to be crowned with an aureole of heavenly blessings. Mother Emilie's appreciation may be said to be a paraphrase of the prayer: "O Jesus, Thou didst command the winds and the storm and there followed a great calm." The correspondence of this period is replete, nay, brimming over with expressions of praise and thanks. About this time Mother Emilie had also the pleasure of announcing to her Sisters the good news that she had obtained another privilege which had been long sought in vain, the legal approbation of the Institute. The decree was signed by Napoleon III, in the Palace of St. Cloud. Nor could she forget the members of her family who had helped, encouraged and sympathized with her when hopes for the future hung on very slender threads. On many occasions, her

brother, Maximin, had been a generous benefactor, so a visit paid to his home in Algeria afforded great pleasure on both sides. On that occasion Mother Emilie had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with her two nieces, who were known to be very virtuous and singularly attractive.

On returning from this visit Mother Emilie learned that a pilgrimage to the Holy Land had been organized in Paris. She took advantage of this opportunity to comply with a request from the Apostolic Delegate for Sisters for another convent in Palestine. The ecclesiastical authorities in Tripoli, Erzerum, Syria and Athens also eagerly sought the help of the labourers trained by Mother Emilie. The Sisters destined for Aleppo had very trying experiences in the course of their journey. On the second day of the voyage a fire broke out on board. The excitement caused by this disaster had hardly subsided, when a terrible storm arose, so that their frail barque was almost dashed to pieces. The next stage of their journey took them across the desert, and here again the valiant missionaries had even greater tribulations. There was no other mode of conveyance than the mules employed in the caravans. The Sisters were inexperienced riders; the journey, in

consequence, bore heavily upon them. But they continued undismayed.

It was remarked that many of the Sisters who had personal intercourse with the Foundress, were animated by her spirit of zeal and devotedness, as well as her unbounded trust in Providence. This was especially noticeable in the first Superior of the convent in Athens. Though the work was begun under the auspices of the Apostolic Delegate, the Sisters had to contend with seemingly insurmountable difficulties.

The Superior was made stronger by adversity, and, at length her zeal and trust in Providence were rewarded. The work developed and prospered for many years. Some time after the death of their great pioneer, the Sisters were once again in dire distress. It occurred to them that the Mother who had first borne the burden would help them, if they invoked her aid. They did so and their petitions were granted in a manner that far surpassed all that they dared to hope for.

CHAPTER IX

LAUDATE

"Mary, the Virgin Mother, proclaimed her own blessedness because she was humble, and knew that her perfection came from God. In her Magnificat she breaks the silence of her Soul. In that song of praise we catch the tremulousness of her joy, filling the air, like the song of the lark with his own torrent of praise. But never for a moment was she dazed by her glories, for her joy was rooted in deep humility."

THERE are memorable days in the history of every nation, every individual and every great enterprise. Forever memorable in the annals of the Sisterhood of St. Joseph must be the day on which their holy Foundress assembled her companions and bade them join with her in a special act of thanksgiving to God, a fervent recitation of the Laudate, for the paternal care *that had never failed her.* Those who were with her most constantly and watched her most closely, knew that the beauties of nature were to Mother Emilie as faint glimpses of the greatness and power and beauty of God; they were likewise aware that the "Sursum Corda" of the daily Mass was

ever-echoed in her soul; over and over again were they given most convincing proofs that no trial, toil or trouble, could ever prevent her from saying with the Psalmist, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, I will praise the Lord. I will sing to my Lord, as long as I shall be." But, when called upon to uplift their hearts to heaven, in this special act of thanksgiving, the Sisters felt that they were uniting their prayers with those of a soul, all aflame with gratitude and holy joy. They also realized that in their venerated Foundress, the words of St. Francis of Sales found literal fulfilment. Addressing religious of another Institute, this saintly prelate said: "Be it known to you that your Congregation will never rear aloft its branches nor bear fruit, save in the measure in which its roots are planted in lowliness and humiliations. But with roots so planted, you will attain the truest humility, and God, seeing in the depth of your hearts this loving tendency, will establish and perfect you in that manner of life to which He hath called you."

But the servant of God would have her sentiments of gratitude permanent and abiding in her Congregation. In a letter addressed to all her spiritual children, she said: "Almighty God has permitted many perse-

cutions to come upon me; but His protecting hand has never failed me. For the past seven years I have been favoured with very striking proofs of divine help and guidance, both in spiritual and temporal concerns. As a feeble acknowledgment, I have made it a rule that the recitation of the Laudate should be added to the prayers said about noon in *all* our convents."

The records of this period seem to be, as it were, attuned to this note of holy joy and gladness. Amongst other signs of progress, Mother Emilie seemed elated over the prospect of opening a house of her Congregation in the diocese of St. Brieu (Brittany). This foundation soon became a great source of blessings to the Institute. In a short time so many excellent vocations were developed, that it was found necessary to establish another Novitiate in that province. Writing to a Sister on a far-distant mission, Mother Emilie gives the following account of a new foundation in England: "The letters from Oxford continue to be a great source of pleasure to us. Sister Cyprian says that they have a fine house and a beautiful garden in the centre of the town. They have already admitted a postulant. Can you guess who she is? Well, none other than the Superior

General of the protestant Sisters established by Dr. Pusey ; she was converted about three years ago. Since she is highly educated, she will be a great boon to our new convent."

In the annals of the Institute there is yet another record of development belonging to this period. In the year 1854 Dr. Serra, a bishop from Australia, addressed a petition to the Mother House at Marseilles for missionary nuns to open a convent at Fremantle. Four Sisters were sent to this new mission. They left London in January 1855 and arrived at their destination only in the month of May. In July of the same year, the first convent school was opened at Fremantle. In 1856 came an urgent request for more labourers for the same mission. Two Sisters were chosen and the Foundress herself accompanied them to Paris to make arrangements for their long journey. These two Sisters were the last to get their "obedience" from Mother Emilie herself.

From a sketch of the Church in Western Australia, published in 1926, we cull the following account of the preparation of this new mission. As already noted, the Foundress looked on all new foundations of her Institute as the result of circumstances truly providential. From this point of view, the

subjoined sketch is exceedingly interesting: "Less than a century ago this western portion of our sunny land of Australia was a mere desert, destitute of all but its possibilities. The Catholic Church, with its civilizing and Christianizing influence, had as yet no place here, nor had the men whose minds were specially fitted by an all-seeing Creator for the grand work of extending His kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth, begun their missions. Led by a star similar to that which brought the Magi to the Crib, though not visible to the human eye, wise men came from distant countries to help on the work of Christ's birth in the hearts of their fellow-men and aid them on the road that leads to Life.

"The Catholics of Perth in 1842 petitioned the Vicar General of New South Wales to send missionaries to relieve the spiritual wants of the Catholic settlers scattered over the district. Archbishop Polding appointed Father Brady, an Irish priest, who had been labouring in the New South Wales mission, as Vicar General of the Settlement. He arrived in Perth in 1843 to begin the glorious, though uphill, work of establishing Catholicity there. Finding that the aboriginal natives were very numerous round about Perth, as well as throughout the whole state, Father Brady,

journeyed to Europe to secure the services of some zealous missionaries to evangelize the blacks and also to get assistance for the Perth mission. He returned to the sphere of his labours accompanied by Dom Salvado and Dom Serra, two Spanish Benedictine priests.

"Pope Gregory XVI, himself a Benedictine, received in special audience the holy missionaries on the occasion of their setting out for this far-distant field of labour. At the close of a beautiful exhortation addressed to Dom Serra and Dom Salvado, the Holy Father said: 'Forget not that you are children of that great Patriarch, our Blessed Father, Benedict. Be mindful of the example set you by those apostolic men, your brethren, who of old not only converted to the Faith so many nations and peoples, but likewise instructed them in the ways of civilization and the arts of a cultured life, and remember that you are entering on a work like unto theirs. And now go forth and may the blessing of the God of Heaven descend on you and on the work you have undertaken.' The Holy Father's prayer was heard, for the labours of these self-sacrificing missionaries were abundantly blessed by God. The aborigines learned to love and reverence the good Fathers, and they, on their part, had the

happiness of seeing the marvellous effects of God's grace in the souls of those for whom they laboured. Very frequently the bare necessities of life were wanting, in spite of the assiduous labours of the self-sacrificing pioneers. At times their choicest food consisted of lizards and edible roots. The same poverty was noticeable in their clothing which was made out of roughly-dried skins of kangaroos. But these privations served to show their cheerfulness in suffering and the trust they had in the protection of the Mother of God. On more than one occasion, when they were suffering the pangs of hunger, Father Salvado, who had a beautiful voice, cheered and charmed his companions by his prayerful singing of the 'Salve Regina.'

The cultivation of the land was primitive. The labour of sinking wells, sawing timber, ploughing, etc., had to be done by the missionaries themselves, and the difficulty of obtaining implements and having them repaired, made their tasks doubly hard. Carrying the ploughshare on his shoulders for fifty miles to the nearest blacksmith for repairs, and carrying it back again *unrepaired*, was truly what Dom Salvado himself smilingly termed it, "a hard experience."

"But God's blessing was on their work, and in

spite of difficulties of every kind, it went on steadily till after a few years these devoted monks had the consolation of seeing this wilderness transformed into a prosperous self-supporting mission. Dom Salvado laboured over fifty years in this mission. Dom Serra was appointed by the Holy See as coadjutor to Dr. Brady, the first Bishop of Perth, and later on he became administrator of the Perth diocese. Realizing that amongst the vast works of the Catholic Church there is none of greater importance than that of training the minds and hearts of children, the new bishop soon established schools at Fremantle. The following brief account of his efforts in that direction is recorded in the sketch already referred to.

"Fremantle, now a prosperous city, was in 1853 so insignificant as to be hardly worthy of the name of a town. Except for a few houses here and there, the only building of any size was the convict establishment. On every side, as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but sand and stunted shrubs, which made the port a very dismal spot. Most of the inhabitants were convicts or the officials in charge, while numbers of aborigines were to be met in every direction. Seeing the need for having the children of

these settlers brought up in Christian principles, Dr. Serra, then Bishop of Perth in succession to Dr. Brady, went to Europe to ask for a foundation of nuns for this purpose.

"He chose the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition as the most suitable, knowing that their holy Foundress had in mind, when founding her Order, to supply distant countries in need of religious teachers with nuns who would not only be ready to take up the work of education but any missionary labours required of them. The head house of this admirable Order readily acceded to the Bishop's request; and in 1855 four Sisters landed in Fremantle in the primitive fashion of those days. They and their luggage were passed over the ship's side into open boats, which, when full, were pushed off amid the farewell cheering of the passengers on the ship.

"The place they had come to was very different from that which they had left, but without looking to the home they had quitted, these brave Sisters courageously faced the bleak outlook, and threw in their lot with those who had left their country for this new settlement."

The pioneer Sisters are now in the enjoyment of their well-earned reward, while their

successors are reaping an abundant harvest from the seed they had sown. Their schools have benefited by the prosperity of the place; the Order has flourished and has well-equipped schools, and not only in Fremantle, but also in Albany, Northam and Kalamunda. The last-named is a recently-established school for young boys, situated on the heights surrounding Perth at a distance of about twenty miles from the Capital. For the next forty-two years no other teaching nuns came to Perth, but as the population considerably increased, the demand for more educational establishments became pressing. The advance in the educational system also required that the Catholic schools should be found in the front rank, hence there arose the necessity for establishing places for higher education. But, before concluding our brief sketch of the work of the Sisters of St. Joseph in this field of labour, we must not fail to mention that a missionary who recently visited their convents in these parts was particularly pleased with the efforts of the Sisters in connection with the distribution of good literature.

Commenting on their zeal in this direction, the missionary remarked that it was gratifying to see how the Sisters had taken to heart and acted on the injunction of the late Pope Pius

SISTERS, NORTHAM CONVENT, W. AUSTRALIA

X in regard to the apostolate of the Catholic Press: "Neither the faithful nor the clergy," says Pius X, "make use of the Press as they should. Sometimes people say that the Press is an innovation, and that souls used to be saved without newspapers in former times. They do not bear in mind that in former times the poison of the bad Press was not spread everywhere, and that, therefore, the antidote was not so necessary. In vain will you build churches, give missions, found schools—all your works will be destroyed, all your efforts fruitless, if you are not able to wield the defensive and offensive weapon of a loyal and sincere Catholic Press."

And now, in resuming our narrative, we find that for the first time in the history of the Institute the work is progressing in peace and tranquillity, both in the central house and on the missions. If gratitude to God for past favours is the best means of obtaining new ones, what untold blessings may be expected, when pain, vexation and difficulty give occasion for expressions of gratitude. This sublime sentiment, together with unbounded trust in Providence, may be said to mark the triumph of Mother Emilie. It is in her correspondence that we find the most natural expression of these sentiments. To Sister

Eugenie, she writes: "You have seen that in the past, Almighty God guided and blessed our efforts through paths intricate and through ways that were often dark and gloomy. I now see that when He allowed our designs to be thwarted, He had something more excellent in store for us. At present, in pity for the weakness of my declining years, He has lightened the burden. I know you will be delighted to hear how His goodness is still manifested to us through His faithful servant, Mgr. de Mazenod. We have now the privilege of daily Mass in our convent here in Marseilles, but it was in his own chapel that His Lordship gave the religious habit to seven of our postulants. Of course I could not let them march through the streets in their bridal costume, so we were obliged to engage a carriage for the great event. As for the new Sisters, they are full of zeal and ardour. Now, should we not repeat with hearts dilated with joy and gladness: 'Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to Him, and His wonderful works to the children of men. Let us never forget all that He hath done for us.'?"

Now while Mother Emilie thus expressed her gratitude to Almighty God for the success of her own special work, her zeal and charity extended to a far wider field. In fact it might

be said that her heart embraced the whole world. Although she ever regarded it as a great happiness to afford comfort to a fellow creature in distress, anything that could further the exaltation of the Church called forth her most ardent enthusiasm. Among the most precious documents in the archives of the Congregation there is one which is especially interesting as a proof of her zeal and enlightenment in this direction.

On this very subject the Little Flower of Jesus says: "To pray for sinners delighted me, to pray for priests, whose souls seemed pure as crystal, that indeed astonished me. But in Italy I realized my vocation and even so long a journey was a small price to pay for such valuable knowledge. . . How beautiful is our vocation! We offer our prayers and sacrifices for the Apostles of the Lord, while they, by word and example, are preaching the Gospel to our brethren. . . But I must say no more, for I feel that on this subject my pen would run on for ever. . ." In the subjoined epistle we shall see how Mother Emilie's pen "ran on" in her intense anxiety regarding a priest whose zeal and devotedness had at one time elicited her warmest admiration. On hearing of his troubles and temptations, she tried to obtain a personal interview. Her

efforts proved fruitless so she sent him this appeal in writing :

"Dear Father and Friend in Jesus Christ, I am deeply grateful for your letter of yesterday, inasmuch as it is a token of the confidence and friendship with which you have favoured me. Oh, that you could realize how deeply I have been impressed by what you have made known to me! You yourself have now assured me of what I had, for some time past, only feared and suspected. The sad tidings have grieved me more than words can say. I am haunted by the thought of your trouble everywhere I go and in everything I do. But what of that! Think, Oh think how the Sacred Heart of our Blessed Lord must be grieved over your defection, since your friends feel it so keenly. I have been obliged to make known this regrettable affair to Father Bourgade. This saintly prelate was actually moved to tears over it, and a short time after hearing the sad news, while preaching in a public church, he was unable to get through his sermon. As for the members of your family, they are plunged in grief more keen and bitter than that which is felt when, suddenly and unexpectedly, a bright and happy home is turned into a house of mourning by the hand of Death. But I do not give

way to the despair which so crushes them. On the contrary, I keep repeating to myself, 'this servant of God, this dear son of Holy Church, will not long remain dead to grace. Oh no, like St. Peter of old, if he has turned aside from his Divine Master, 'twill be only for a brief period, and he will love Him all the more ardently and serve Him all the more zealously in the future.' Do not say, for me there is no hope of pardon. As my spiritual Father, let me assure you that in the past your exhortations have inspired me with sentiments of the greatest confidence and trust in God. Oh, surely the light of God's grace will not fail you now, in the hour of *your own* sore need and dire distress. For the time being you are, as it were, enveloped in dark clouds, but, through their darkness, I can perceive faint glimmerings of light. What could have urged you to write to me about the appointment of a priest that could replace you? What but your zeal for the glory of God? To me this is a presage of your happy return to the path of duty. How joyful will be the day when these, my desires and hopes, will be fully realized! I assure you, dear Father, that greater joy than mine could hardly be experienced, for then I shall see you such as you have been in reality, such as you are at present, were you

only freed from this phantom of heresy and illusion. I shall have the same trust and confidence in you as of old. Surely it is not necessary to remind you of the teaching of the Church in regard to temporary lapses. It is only while the will is obstinately determined on evil courses that the merits of acquired virtue are lost. It is only when the person in this state is overtaken by death that there is no possibility of regaining the friendship of God or that life of union with our Heavenly Father, which, even here below, is such a source of peace and comfort.

"Oh, let me beseech you to recover the precious fruits of your labours in the sacred ministry. It was for the sake of the Good Master, it was for the sacredness and sanctity of your calling that you kept your heart pure and unsullied all through your life; be sure He will not fail you in your hour of difficulty and distress. Let me then persuade you to go to Rome. It is there that the virtues of truth and mercy may be said to commingle in a special manner. In that city of the soul, I have friends who are both powerful and benevolent, they will be your friends also. Go first of all to the Superior of the St. Louis establishment, this prelate who is a man after God's own heart will introduce you to others.

I repeat once more that you will find in this prelate a lively image of the Blessed Redeemer Himself. Does not that suffice to attract and encourage you? In the meantime, I shall beseech the Almighty and Merciful God that He may deign to hear my prayers in your behalf.

"I understand from your letter that you have been influenced by the irregular conduct of those who should be an example of every virtue. You are a priest of God and I look up to you as to a friend and helper. Now, weak woman though I am, I do not hesitate to assert that, had I obtained the interview I sought, had I been able to speak to you in your hours of indignation and anguish, I might have imparted to you something of the courage which, through the help of God's grace, has enabled me to remain firm and constant in many a trying situation, and even in the face of difficulties somewhat similar to those with which you are now beset. I can assure you that, even if but few priests were animated by the spirit of their vocation, even if I saw the greater number devoid of Christian virtue, even *then*, my faith would be in no way shaken, no, for that faith is not based on the personal holiness of Christ's ministers, but on His solemn pronouncements as contained in the

Gospel. Even amongst His chosen twelve did He not in the person of Judas have to deal with the greatest of scandals? How did the Good Master address the traitor even in the act of betrayal? Was it not with the endearing title of friend? Then, how can we give way to indignation, when there is question of the failings of others? Would we ourselves not fall into greater errors, were we not sustained by God's grace?

"Oh, my dear Father and friend, once again do I appeal to your tender charity, to your zeal for the salvation of souls, the zeal that inspired you to appeal to me to aid you in establishing Catholic Schools in your island.* The difficulties which now harass you are as so many fogs of the earth which obscure your spiritual vision. Rise above these noxious vapours. God's grace will not be wanting to enlighten and sustain you, so that you will set aside all human respect. You are now given a grand opportunity of practising self-abasement. Up to the present, your zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls was encouraged by the good name you have so justly acquired. In the act of humility which will be demanded of you in returning to the Church you will feel that you are deprived of

*Malta.

this prestige. What then ? Is it not evident that Almighty God wishes you to make use of this opportunity, so that in future your apostolate will be free from all taint of self-gratification. His interests alone will be the motive of all your actions. Then, under these circumstances, will you not be able to say, more truly than ever, 'I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Yes, in future God alone will be the motive power of all your actions. Happy death to self which you are going to acquire in a few moments, happy immolation which those who have never strayed from the right path have hardly been able to acquire in the efforts of a lifetime.

"I must ask you to excuse me kindly for writing at such length. In the hour of your distress, you have appealed to me in the name of religious friendship, and this it is which gives me the liberty to speak with a freedom which may appear somewhat audacious in a weak woman. But you will excuse me, for I have been actuated only by a desire for your welfare, in fact for your eternal happiness.

"I have the honour to be, with respect and devotedness, Your humble servant in Jesus Christ,

"Emilie de Vialar."

If this poor tortured soul allowed the mood of a moment to affect his convictions, it is gratifying to learn that to him may be applied the remarkable utterance of a distinguished convert of our own times: "We never find our religion so right as when we find we have been wrong about it." Mother Emilie had the great joy of hearing that Father N. . . *did* go to the Eternal City; the still greater joy of hearing that, in his case, the road to Rome proved to be "the road to Damascus. . ."

Among the records of success and triumph of this period, not the least noteworthy is the revival of the work in Mother Emilie's native town. Our Divine Lord has said that unless the grain of wheat die when cast into the ground, itself alone remaineth, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. Under the saddest of circumstances the first convent of the Congregation was closed and the work abandoned. Through the generosity of her brother the Foundress was able to retain possession of the home itself, and, in her own life-time, the Sisters had the gratification of recommencing their work of charity and reopening their convent school in Gaillac. The bulletin of the Congregation for September 1926 contains an account of a public function which took place in that very convent. A few extracts

from a speech made by a leading townsman on that occasion may be fittingly quoted, as a conclusion to our records of success and triumph.

Having paid a warm tribute of gratitude for personal benefits, the speaker said : "This our little provincial town is associated with the beginnings of a very important work. It is well nigh a hundred years since Emilie de Vialar, following the aspirations of her great and generous soul, full of faith and zeal for religion, set the welfare of others before her own. Her worthy daughters still strive after the ideal of their great pioneer, who had borne the brunt of many difficulties, humiliations and privations. From its humble beginnings in this little town, the work has extended to far-distant lands. At the very moment when I am addressing you, how many nations could join their voices to mine, in doing homage to the Congregation of St. Joseph of the Apparition. How many could now unite with me in revering the name of Emilie de Vialar, the noble Foundress of this Congregation ! Who can count the number of children of all races who owe to this Institute the precious blessings of faith and education ? Who can count the number of sick and suffering ones to whom her spiritual daughters

have brought comfort and relief ? As regards their educational establishments the course of studies is on a par with the best that can be had. But we look for something more than tuition, when there is question of the education of our children. As Christian parents we realize that our children have immortal souls, and, while appreciating the advantages of mental culture, we realize that religious training is indispensable to their general well-being. We would have our children strong to resist evil, well-disciplined, pure in heart, courageous in the inevitable sorrows of life, in a word we would have them so enlightened by Faith that they strive after all that is holy and just, all that is pure and noble, and these precious blessings cannot be imparted to the souls of human beings by a system of education from which religion is excluded. We send our daughters to be educated here in order that they become valiant women, ready to do and dare when there is question of the sacred call of duty. Amidst the changing scenes of the political tableaux of the present day, we know not what the morrow may bring us ; but this we do know, that only in proportion as the rising generation becomes more truly Christian have we promise of greater purity of morals, greater prosperity, power and progress."

CHAPTER X

THE DAWN OF ETERNITY

"In the Resurrection Christ was victorious over sin and death. Through Him we share in grace, immortality, and peace. 'Peace,' sang the angels announcing His birth. 'My Peace I leave you,' were His last parting words. . . The Resurrection is like the coming of the dawn across the high hills. . . He has gone before us and is beckoning us on. At each new dawn of Eternity's day our Friend stands on the shore, as He once stood by the Sea of Galilee where, with His Own Hands, He lit the fire and prepared food and welcome for hungry men. For the soul who loves Him and has Known Him, death will be as the wanderer's return, when he sees through the open door the cheering rays of the firelight on the hearth of home."—Fr. Blowick, in *The Far East.*

In the month of June 1856, Mother Emilie visited her relations in Paris. On her return, the Sisters noticed that she was somewhat fatigued. However, shortly after her arrival in Marseilles, she wrote to her cousin, Madame d'Aubilly : "On reaching home I found all the members of the community in very good form. It would be difficult to describe or explain to you, how great was their joy on seeing me again. Since my return, I have been busy

making preparations for the departure of several Sisters who are urgently needed for the work in the different houses. Three have just left for Tuscany where the schools are progressing wonderfully well. From Athens also I have had good reports of progress. On the Feast of Corpus Christi sixty children from our convent took part in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. They carried a beautiful banner of the Blessed Virgin and, being all dressed in white, they made a very pretty picture. This was a novel spectacle to the Greeks who seemed to be lost in wonder and admiration, as they assembled in large numbers to watch the procession."

Mother Emilie seemed to have recovered from her fatigue and was most assiduous in her labours in connection with the general needs of the Institute, as well as those of the Novitiate. During the octave of the Feast of the Assumption she addressed a very touching exhortation to her Sisters on the words of the Gospel: "Love one another." Although the necessity and importance of fraternal charity had been frequently pointed out, and her own personal example was a perpetual sermon on the subject, yet the Sisters were strangely impressed by the words of their Reverend Mother on this occasion. In point of fact,

they were then actually listening to her parting injunction—her last testament to her spiritual children. Whenever they recalled that instruction they felt that they should repeat the full text of the words of the Good Master "Love one another, *as I have loved you.*"

In the days of her early youth, this heroine of charity had injured herself by dragging a sack of corn for distribution amongst the poor. The infirmity then contracted often caused intense sufferings, more especially during her sea voyages. On Friday, August the 22nd, symptoms became noticeable, which greatly alarmed the Sisters. Mother Emilie's two nieces had come on a visit to the convent quite happy at the thought of spending a few weeks with one whom they so dearly loved; now they shared the anxiety of the Sisters. Every effort had been made to ward off the blow. The Sisters feared that all would be lost, if deprived of their Mother General who was the life and soul of the Institute. They were plunged in grief on realizing that there was no hope of recovery. Her strength was fast ebbing away, and yet Mother Emilie expressed her anxiety in regard to a suffering member of the Community, whom she herself had been tending a few days previously.

"Devotedness unto death" was the Motto she had selected for her Congregation.

Realizing her own danger, she asked for the last Sacraments, saying, "If God wishes to take me, I am quite resigned and willing to go." The sacred rites were performed. Then, sustained and comforted by the Bread of Life, which is a source of spiritual strength to the weak and makes the fervent soul experience the sweetness of divine love, Mother Emilie passed away, silently, calmly and peacefully. Her sorrowful children most bitterly bemoaned their loss; they were united to her by ties far stronger than those of earthly kinship; the anguish of their hearts could not be suppressed at the thought that their beloved Mother could no longer be their guide on the path that she had so heroically traced for them.

In early youth when announcing her final departure from home, Mother Emilie assured her father that he might still look on her as a most loving and devoted child; all that could possibly tend to his comfort and well-being would be done as occasion offered and that with even more tenderness and affection than she had hitherto shown him. . . Now, in the midst of their grief, the Sisters felt that some such message was addressed to them. In

some mysterious manner they were gradually strengthened and encouraged by the thought that the good work would continue. Was it not established by means of sufferings and crosses ? Still, so great was the void in their hearts, so sorely did they need the living voice, that in their first great trial, after the sad bereavement, they sought direction from the celebrated Curé of Ars.

Having explained their difficulties and troubles in regard to the good work, they eagerly awaited his reply. After a few moments spent in reflection the Curé said: "The Congregation of Madame de Vialar is very dear to our Blessed Lord and to your patron, St. Joseph. It will not perish, on the contrary it will develop and prosper, for you are destined to do a great work."

Several years afterwards the Sisters were further encouraged by learning that the patron of their Institute, the good St. Joseph, had made a similar promise in their behalf. Mother Emilie herself related to a member of her own family that St. Joseph had appeared to her, and assured her of the future of her Congregation.

The event is recorded thus: Being almost in despair over obstacles and hindrances in connection with her good work, Mother Emilie

threw herself on her knees, and while pouring forth her soul and all the anguish of her heart in earnest prayer and supplication, St. Joseph appeared to her and said: "Do not be discouraged, my child, you will meet with many obstacles and hindrances, you will be overwhelmed with trials most painful and bitter; these will be multiplied, but your work will prosper."

. . . .

[Tributes to the memory of the deceased]

A large concourse of people came to pay the last tribute of love and veneration, and all were deeply impressed on beholding the beautiful countenance of the deceased. The angelic loveliness of youth seemed to blend with an aspect of heavenly peace and serenity. The interment took place in the cemetery of St. Charles in Marseilles on the 26th of August 1856. . . At the time of her death, her desolate companions were eagerly desirous of possessing some souvenir or relic that would be to them a source of inspiration and encouragement; they obtained permission to have the heart of their holy Foundress placed in a shrine in a little oratory erected in the garden of their convent at La Capelette. This oratory is such a favourite resort of the

Novices that it has come to be known as the Novices' Chapel.

The Sisters had not been many years in Marseilles, and yet their sad bereavement evoked many touching testimonies of regret, as well as tokens of appreciation: "The Saint is dead"; "The great charitable lady has passed away"; "The chief support of the convent is gone, it can hardly survive this loss." These and similar remarks could be heard on all sides. The public press was not less appreciative. The following passage is an extract from a long article that was published in the Gazette du Midi (Marseilles)—"Education, fortune, energetic earnestness of purpose, solid piety, purity of motive and its consequent spirit of detachment—all these did Madame de Vialar devote to the best of all causes; she has departed from this world, peacefully, and with the hope of a bright and prosperous future for the Institute, which she affectionately cherished as a work of God, and which she so strenuously laboured to establish in His Church. . ."

Many a glowing tribute also came from afar; from missionaries and others who had known Mother Emilie, through her works of charity. The chaplain of a convent, an orphanage in Northern Africa, wrote to the

Superior of the Mother House, and after expressing his deep regret, he said : "'Tis true that the Saints belong to God ; but there are times when one is inclined to wonder why He takes them away from this world in which their presence is so sorely needed. Your Foundress was the consolation and support of her religious family during her earthly career, and now, after her death, she will be to them a source of inspiration and encouragement, constantly beckoning them upwards and onwards. I consider it a great privilege to have been acquainted with her. . ."

Father Bourgade also wrote in noble and respectful terms regarding the virtues of the servant of God. . . All these tributes of esteem and affection were greatly prized by the Sisters, for, while mourning over their great loss, they were, at the same time, most anxious to secure tokens of esteem which would help them to transmit to future members of the Congregation something of the indelible impressions that were engraved on their own hearts by personal intercourse.

In response to enquiries, the following accounts were given at a later date by members of the de Vialar family:

[Madame Euphemie de Vialar to Mother Celeste.]

"In reply to your inquiries as to what we may have heard from others, relative to your venerated Foundress, I am pleased to tell you that about fifteen years ago I made the acquaintance of Fr. Marie Antoine, a Capuchin priest from Toulouse. He is so highly esteemed for the holiness of his life, that he is frequently referred to as 'the Saintly Fr. Antoine.' Well, on hearing my name, he showed some surprise, and immediately asked if there was any connection between my family and that of the Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. On my replying in the affirmative, he said : 'I saw her but once ; but when one gets in touch with such a soul, the impression is not soon effaced, in fact, it is ineffaceable. You have a great saint in Paradise. Her soul was pure as the crystal of the rocks.' These are his very words. As for my own opinion, I can say that, even when too young to appreciate her virtues, we all revered and loved her. . . We now look on her as the brightest ornament of our family, even as our angel guardian and constant protectress."

The following little incident will serve to show how Mother Emilie was revered by Madame de Beffroi, the head mistress of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Paris. On a

certain occasion she paid a visit to her two nieces who were attending that school, and brought them what must be called a rather unusual sort of treat, especially for young ladies of that fashionable establishment. On reaching the reception room, Mother Emilie took out a bottle of milk and a tumbler from a basket which she herself had carried on her arm. After her departure, the little girls complained to Madame de Beffroi, saying that they felt quite ashamed when they were requested to drink milk in the presence of the other young ladies. Though greatly embarrassed, they said they dared not refuse. However, Madame de Beffroi did not sympathize with them in the least. On the contrary, she said: "Ah, my children, your aunt is a very holy person, I even look on her as a saint, so you must not do anything that would sadden her, even in the least degree. In future, you will see her in a little private parlour, where you will be quite free to take whatever she may offer you." This precaution being taken there was no further embarrassing experience in connection with her visits, which, except for this little event, always gave occasion for the greatest delight and joy.

Another relative writes: "The charity of

our cousin Emilie was inexhaustible; she gave up everything in that holy cause. The fortune that she inherited on the death of her mother was spent in establishing the Congregation. Later on, she spent another large fortune in endeavouring to develop its works; she was deceived by persons she considered reliable and trustworthy, yet, far from complaining, she even tried to excuse those who caused her most suffering. Great in all virtues—in charity she excelled. . ."

. . . .

Mother Emilie passed away in the month of August 1856. For many years the Sisters prayed to be allowed to have her sacred remains transferred to a new burial-place in their convent at La Capelette; only in the year 1914 was their pious desire gratified. The ceremony of reinterment took place on the 10th of March, under the direction of Canon Nioullon, Vicar General of Marseilles. During the celebration of Holy Mass an Oblate Father pronounced a grand panegyric on the life and works of the venerated Foundress. Referring to the shrine containing the heart of this servant of God, he said: "Oh my dear Sisters, that sacred treasure is fittingly deposited there. This, the central

house of your Congregation, very rightly contains the heart of your holy Foundress. In the human body it is from the heart that life blood is diffused to all its members, even so, from this central home of your religious Sisterhood, year by year, generous souls go forth, inspired by the zeal and ardent charity with which that heart was all aglow. . ."

The ceremony closed with the chanting of the Benedictus, while the corpse of the venerable Mother was consigned to its new sepulchre, in a little chapel within the Convent enclosure. . .

On a slab over the grave, the following epitaph is inscribed :

Here rests, in the peace of our Blessed Lord and Saviour,
Anne Marguerite Adelaide Emilie de Vialar,
Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition,
Which she governed for the space of twenty-four years,
With great sweetness and admirable zeal. . .

In proportion as her work developed and prospered, she annihilated herself more and more, attributing all to God alone. . . She

died on the 24th of August 1856 at the age of 59 years.

. . . .

Oh, dear good Mother, may Almighty God watch over those you have left here below—your spiritual children who will never forget you !

CHAPTER XI

THE FOUNDRESS

"One Single Soul, Oh! What is it worth? His heart's last drop Who redeemed the earth.
One Single Soul! Ah saints have died to bring one soul to the Crucified.
How many souls eternal may be thine, and a throne like that where seraphs shine,
The angels in wonder and envy see the glorious mission God gives to thee."

THERE are some persons who wield a vast influence over the lives of their fellow-beings. In the forefront of these stand the founders of religious Orders and Congregations. Their influence for good is not restricted to those close around them nor limited to their contemporaries; through the members of the religious Congregations founded by them, they exert a spiritual influence which extends to the limits of the earth and runs down the centuries.

Mother Emilie de Vialar was the Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition.* In order to

*By special request, the whole of this chapter was contributed by a priest.

appreciate her greatness, or the greatness of any foundress or founder of a religious Order, it is necessary to grasp the meaning of religious life and the special aim and end of the Congregation founded. All Mother Emilie's virtues, her force of character, her indomitable energy, her patient endurance of affliction, her love of prayer, her zeal for souls, contributed to build up and consolidate her religious Congregation. In its turn, that same religious Congregation helped to preserve and increase her virtues and add the crowning virtue, religious perfection.

The religious life means the striving after perfection, a close and intimate union with God by the help of the triple vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. The human soul has a desire, implanted within it, to tend towards God her maker, but is hindered by the pleasures and attractions of the world. The vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience imply the renunciation of precisely those things which are a drag upon the soul in her heavenward flight.

This renunciation, complete as it is final, is made, not for its own sake, nor to build a pedestal from which to look down upon others who have not made the renunciation of the world, but for Jesus' sake, for His love, in

order to follow Him more closely, to be more intimately united with Him, to work more effectively and wholeheartedly for His interests, for the salvation of souls, and thus secure an eternal bond of divine union in the supernal love and unending bliss of heaven.

The religious life, the higher life of prayer and union with God and its implied renunciation of self and the pleasure of the world, is beautifully described in the Gospel.

Bidding Galilee a last farewell Jesus crossed the Jordan and descended the eastern bank of the stream. As the Master, surrounded by His disciples, walked beside the sparkling waters, a young man closely watched Him. This young man saw the Pharisees approach and ask questions which concerned them; he witnessed the mothers bringing their little ones to be blessed by Jesus: so he, too, would seek the solution of a problem that burnt at his heart. According to St. Luke's gospel, this young man was wealthy, of high reputation and still higher spiritual aspirations. He hungered for something more than the precepts of the decalogue. Approaching Jesus and bowing before Him, he asked, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

Jesus replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments."

"Which commandments?" the young man enquired eagerly.

Jesus enumerated the chief commandments of the Mosaic Law, "Do not bear false witness, do not kill, do not steal, honour thy father and thy mother," etc.

The young man replied that he had observed all these things from his youth. "What is yet wanting to me?" he enquired.

One of the Evangelists makes the beautiful remark, "Jesus looking on him loved him." The Reader of hearts saw that this was an upright, good, pure soul, a soul fit for the higher life. Since the young man had observed all the Commandments, Jesus would now teach him the counsels of perfection, the narrow path which leads its followers to sublime heights of sanctity.

"One thing is yet wanting unto thee," Jesus told him, "If thou *wilt* be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and *Come follow Me.*" When the young man heard this word, he went away sad, for he had great possessions. He was unable to make the sacrifice of parting with his riches and therefore rejected his vocation.

Did that rich young man enter into eternal life? Is he now with that Jesus in heaven from whom on earth he turned away? We cannot say; we know only that memorable sentence uttered by our Lord whilst this young man walked away: "Amen, I say to you that a rich man will hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The apostles and disciples wondered very much when they heard all this. Peter took advantage of the occasion to enquire about those who *did* renounce all and follow Jesus. Our Blessed Lord replied: "Everyone who hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or child for My name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and possess life everlasting."

The call of Jesus to the higher life, the religious life, rejected by the young man of the Gospel and accepted by Peter and the Apostles, has been unceasingly repeated throughout the ages. Many and many a young man and maid has, during the twenty centuries since it was first uttered, heard that call again and again. In the case of some it has met with a ready response; in the case of others it has fallen on deaf ears. Like the young man of the Gospel, they have turned away sad from their Saviour. In the case of

others still, when, on hearing that "Come Follow Me," they ask themselves, "How can I know I have a vocation?" Christ gives you the answer. He tells you it depends on yourself, your will, "If thou *wilt* be perfect go sell what thou hast and give to the poor; and *Come Follow Me.*"

If one feels that the pleasures of the world are hollow and unable to satisfy the heart, and the desire of purity is strong, the love of prayer great, the love of Jesus ardent; the wish to follow Him and do good to souls urgent and pressing; if, moreover, health and strength are not lacking, this person has received the vocation—the grand call to the higher life.

Emilie de Vialar was one of those who heard and did not refuse to obey the call: "If thou *wilt* be perfect. . . *Come Follow Me.*" Abandoning the world, vowing perpetual virginity, she wished to spend herself and be spent in Christ's service. All her great wealth was to be expended in assisting the poor in their necessities, and nursing the sick in hospitals, and thus through works of Christian charity, she would in the first place sanctify herself and then bring others, assisted by her labours and example, to know and love Jesus more. Very soon after Emilie de

Vialar had started out on this holy work, some young ladies came forward and begged to help her. And in this way a little band of devoted workers was formed. This little band quickly increased; the number grew to that extent which necessitated a body of rules and a definite constitution. Emilie de Vialar set to work on this important task.

Christmas Day 1832 is a memorable date in the Congregation, for on that day the new Congregation, with the title "Sisters of St. Joseph of The Apparition," was founded. Three years later the Congregation was approved by His Grace, Mgr. Gauly, Archbishop of Albi, and on the 6th of May 1842 it received the Laudatory Decree from the Holy See. The aim and end of the Congregation, as well as its title "Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition," were thus definitely fixed by episcopal and papal approval. The final recognition as a religious Congregation came fifteen years after the death of the Foundress, in the year, 1870.

There are in the Church various kinds of religious Orders instituted for different reasons. Some are purely contemplative Orders like the Carmelite and Colettines who spend all their time in holy meditation and prayer ; other Orders and Congregations combine the

contemplative life with active duties like teaching, nursing, etc. The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition has a twofold end—contemplative and active; for, on the one hand, sanctity, union with and love of God are to be striven after by prayer and the practice of every interior virtue, and on the other hand, the Sisters are to devote themselves, especially in mission countries, to the education of girls, visiting and consoling the poor, nursing the sick, etc. The contemplative life is to be the inward source of strength and efficacy for the exterior works of teaching, visiting, nursing; and these exterior works are to uplift souls and bring them to their Saviour. It is in this way the divine mission to spread the glad tidings of Salvation is to be accomplished by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. The beautiful title itself sheds a bright light on the object of the Congregation.

According to St. Matthew's Gospel, it was to St. Joseph that the mystery of the Incarnation was revealed a second time by an angel. "Behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep saying, Joseph, Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for what is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a Son and thou

shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Thus the great and mighty Mystery of the Divine Incarnation was revealed to St. Joseph. Among the Jews, only the father had the right to name the child; in charging Joseph to give the name Jesus, God appointed him foster-father of the Incarnate Word. St. Joseph's mission consequently was not only to feed, to clothe, to safeguard, to cherish Jesus in the shelter of his home, but he was commissioned to give the name Jesus, the name to be made known to every race and tribe, the name which apostles and missionaries were destined to spread to the uttermost parts of the earth; for through the Incarnation and in that Holy Name, the world would be saved. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins."

The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition consider that the duty has been confided to them of making known the Holy Name of Jesus, the mission of spreading far and wide the glad tidings of the Incarnation revealed to St. Joseph. They fulfil this mission by setting up schools where children are taught to know and love Jesus; by visiting the poor whose privations become lighter because endured for Him who was born in a stable; by nursing

the sick, who, seeing the unremitting devotedness of the Sisters, are brought to think how good and great must be the Master that teaches such sublime self-sacrifices and self-forgetfulness to His disciples. The model to be imitated in all this work is St. Joseph the just man. From the foster-father, the Sisters learn to love prayer, to be united to Jesus; from St. Joseph and the Holy Family they learn to live hidden obscure lives; and they are likewise led to understand that amidst sorrows, in much toil, labour and humiliations, the spreading of the Holy Name is to be accomplished.

The work is, indeed, being done and the labours of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition are ever extending. On the death of the Foundress in 1856 the Congregation counted forty-two houses; it now numbers over a hundred establishments situated in widely distant parts of the earth. The Mother House stands in Marseilles and various houses dot the Mediterranean basin, Tunis, Malta, Cyprus. The Sisters are to be found in the Balkans. They are spread over Burma. They have won their way to Australia. But where the Congregation thrives best and has flung out most branches and where there is every promise of a most fruitful and extensive

harvest, is in the land where the blessed apparition of the angel to St. Joseph occurred, the land of the Incarnation, the land made holy by the presence of our Lord when He dwelt amongst us in human form.

ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT, BASSEIN, BURMA

First Row : " Suffer the little children to come unto Me."
Second Row (left to right, centre) : Rev. Fr. Horley, Secretary to Ap. Delegate ; His Lordship Bishop Perroy ; His Excellency Mgr. Mooney, Ap. Delegate to the Indies ; Rev. Fr. Provost, priest in charge.
Back Row : Karen Sisters, novices and postulants. (*January 11th*, 1929)

CHAPTER XII

THE MISSIONS

(The Vatican Exhibition; Work in the Far East; Burma, Australia, England.)

"He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord and He will repay him," we read in the book of Proverbs ; and our Saviour says,

"Give and it shall be given to you : good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give unto your bosom. For with what measure you shall mete, withal, it shall be measured to you again." Mission work offers the best opportunity to follow these invitations, both of the Old and the New Testaments, and the surest way to obtain the promise contained therein.

THE ways of Divine Providence, though at times inscrutable and even a trial to our faith, are, on certain occasions, manifested so clearly and in a manner so well adapted to events here below, that we are forced to cry out : "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been His counsellor ?—Hath He not done all things well ?"

Mother Emilie de Vialar was an ardent and zealous missionary. The cause of her beatification and canonization was introduced into

the court of Rome in the Holy Year—the year of jubilee, during which the work in mission lands was made a special feature of that solemnity. What a source of joy and gladness to her spiritual children that this event should occur at such a time, and that it should also coincide with the inspiring encyclical of Pope Pius XI which came as a trumpet call to the whole Catholic world to make every effort to carry the Cross of Christ to the ends of the earth. It was with feelings of the greatest satisfaction, joy and gratitude that the visitors to the Vatican Missionary Exhibition, who had a knowledge of the servant of God and her great work, beheld her portrait in the historic apartment known as the room of the saints. The Sisters who were there present as representatives of her Congregation, were likewise filled with joy and gladness of heart, with deep emotion, and filial reverence ; but above all with sentiments of profound gratitude to Almighty God, on beholding that portrait of their Mother Foundress with its inspiring inscription : "Emilie de Vialar, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, Missionary in Africa, Palestine and the Far East. The cause of her beatification has been introduced in the Court of Rome on the 19th of May, 1925."

In the adjoining apartment the visitors were attracted by a large relief-map of Palestine. Following the explanations of the guide, it was easy to get an exact idea of the Holy Land, and the work of the missionaries in that very interesting portion of the vineyard of the Good Master. In this tableau, the Sisters of St. Joseph occupied a prominent place and the specimens of the work done in their schools attracted special notice. No less than 140 Orders and Congregations were represented amongst the exhibitors and the special address of the Holy Fathers to the Missionary Nuns was most touching and impressive.

In this address the Sovereign Pontiff first referred to the efficacy and beauty of the nuns' prayer. His Holiness said that, as he spoke, he thought of the vision of St. John, of the luminous cloud of incense mounting to the throne of God and of the Lamb—an image of the prayer of the saints. This vision, the Pope said, came before him whenever he thought of the prayer of the nuns and when he reflected on these great religious families, these assemblies of chosen souls spread throughout the entire world, this great multitude of virginal spouses of the Lamb, who live a life of prayer.

What the Church and what the world owe

to the prayer of these spouses of the Lamb, is a Divine Mystery. By their religious vows the Sisters unite the precious and beautiful virtue of purity to their life of prayer, and so exquisite is this virtue that it attracts the complacency of Almighty God. This virtue shone forth with such brilliancy in His virginal Mother, that it rendered her all beautiful, beautiful in her prayer, beautiful in her work, beautiful in all the aspects of her life, as the Mother of the Redeemer. The Pope also said that missionary work has, indeed, been benefited by prayer, and that the apostolate is an absolutely divine work, because it is solely concerned with the enlightenment and guidance of souls—it is a work in which all human ingenuities ought to co-operate, without being too grand or too excessive ; but no one can obtain the wished-for results without God's grace. The Holy Father added that some nuns not only prayed but they also applied themselves to manual labour and to intellectual work, for the support and assistance of the missions. They also strove to give some small splendour to the Tabernacle —that is, to Jesus Himself, Who so many times literally returns to the cave at Bethlehem in the poor chapel of the missionary priest.

Continuing his discourse His Holiness said

that the zeal thus exercised is a most striking manifestation of the love of the religious for the Divine Spouse of their souls and to himself personally it is a source of ineffable consolation. "While expressing these words of appreciation to you, my beloved Daughters now here present, we also most affectionately bear in mind all your Sisters and all the religious, no matter to what Congregation they may belong. In regard to vocation there is in reality no distinction, for there is but one divine call, and but one end in view in responding to that call. Yes, most affectionately do we bear in mind all those Sisters who have worked for the missionary exhibition and all who take part in the great work of extending Christ's Kingdom here below. Well do we realize the great good they accomplished; well do we know that they even prepare the way for the missionaries themselves—all these generous workers are now remembered as if actually present, for most ardently do we wish them here at this moment in order to participate with you in the great joy and triumph of this assembly.

"We pray that their guardian angels may communicate to them at this moment something of the sweetness and beauty of the atmosphere created around us by your zeal and

charity, something of the sentiments which now fill our souls. We pray that our Divine Lord may extend to all, as a sign of the riches of His grace, the blessing that, with all our heart, we shall in a little while impart to all those present, as a visible sign of our gratitude and as an expression of the gratitude of the Church and of Jesus Christ Himself. Wherever they may be at this present time working for God and for the salvation of souls, wherever they may be, even though in suffering and sorrow at this very moment of our rejoicing, we pray that this blessing may descend upon them each and all."

Having ended his discourse, His Holiness Pius XI descended from his throne and distributed medals and diplomas to the general superiors and representatives of the different institutes that had taken part in the great work of the Missionary Exhibition. At the close of this function, the Holy Father in a most genial manner remarked that, while all the world was wondering at the marvellous success of the Exhibition in spite of the hasty preparation, the problem had been solved for him by the presence of all these generous co-labourers who, with such whole-hearted devotedness, had contributed to its success.

The Missionary Museum, that would remain as a precious remembrance of the Exhibition, not only serves as a substantial record of past labour, but would prove to be of great advantage in connection with future enterprise in the fields afar. At the conclusion of this discourse the Holy Father gave the apostolic blessing, once again reminding those present that this blessing was bestowed upon all the members of their Congregations, on all their missionary labours and even on the intentions and pious desires that each one had at heart at the time. . . In this assembly of nuns, the Mother General of the Congregation of Mother Emilie de Vialar, was represented by the Superioress of the convent in Rome. The Holy Father's appreciation of their work was marked by the bestowal of two medals and a diploma for the Congregation. Besides these marks of distinction, eight Sisters of St. Joseph and one postulant also received, from the hands of the Holy Father, silver decorations and commemorative medals. It is hardly necessary to add that the tidings of this happy event were joyfully received in the Mother House in Capelette and in all the houses of the Congregation. Apart from these signs of approval so graciously bestowed by His Holiness, it was considered a great

privilege to be thus associated with a work so dear to the heart of Christ's Vicar on earth.

WORK IN THE FAR EAST

Lower Burma

Amongst the most noteworthy developments in this province is the formation of a native Sisterhood which has been placed under the protection of St. Francis Xavier. So writes Bishop Perroy, who expresses his appreciation as follows: "Thanks to the devotedness, zeal and energy of the religious of the Good Shepherd and the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, the mission in Southern Burma has been blessed with educational establishments of a high order. The degree of excellence attained in these schools has placed them on a par with the highest and best in the province, and the mission is justly proud of their success." But it was quite otherwise with the out-stations and mission centres in the district.

It is needless to dwell on the hopeless outlook of poor missionary labourers, whose efforts are unsupported by religious educators and willing helpers in works of charity such as tending the sick and other corporal works of mercy.

With a view to supplying this urgent need the late Bishop Bigandet directed the nuns of the Good Shepherd to form a Congregation of indigenous Sisters. The project was taken up and some earnest workers, thus prepared and trained, rendered very good service indeed. But for one reason or another the new Congregation did not develop in numbers and, at the death of Bishop Bigandet, it consisted of but twenty members all told.

Bishop Cardot, his immediate successor, being eagerly desirous of promoting this particular apostolate, considered the Sisterhood of St. Joseph more suitable than the religious of a semi-cloistered Order. Accordingly on the fiftieth anniversary of their arrival in Burma this new work was proposed to them. The offer was gladly accepted and the little town of Bassein, being the centre of the Karen mission, was considered the most suitable place for the new novitiate.

Sister Catherine was chosen as Superior and it seemed as if she was especially suited for this office. Besides great zeal and ardent charity, she also had a thorough knowledge of the Burmese language. Everything seemed most promising. The day and date of the opening of the new novitiate were fixed. All was in readiness to commence the good work,

when a most unexpected obstacle intervened. Sister Catherine was taken ill, and, to the great disappointment and sorrow of all concerned, it was discovered that the poor Sister was actually afflicted with the dreadful disease of leprosy. We may well believe that her patience and resignation in this great trial did more for the success of the new enterprise than her actual co-operation would have effected...

Sister Maria was then chosen to replace her and, with three Karen postulants for the novitiate, the convent was opened in Bassein on the 26th August 1897. Difficulties and trials were not wanting. In fact the first stage of the work was a period of calamities, obstacles and hindrances of all sorts, but eventually the little community secured a firm footing, and, on the 30th of August 1899, three aspirants to this new Sisterhood of St. Francis Xavier made their religious profession. Every year since has brought its little contingent of postulants, so that, in 1902, these auxiliary Sisters were sufficiently numerous to commence work in foundations of their own, and at the present time (1927) they are doing excellent work in eight different posts of the mission. There are now sixty-two professed Sisters and, year by year,

vocations are becoming more numerous, so that, with God's good help, we hope to see these Sisters of St. Francis Xavier at work in all the mission centres of Lower Burma.

. . . .

An Outsider's tribute.

On the occasion of the jubilee celebration in a convent in this province, the following speech was made by a government official.*

"My Lord Bishop, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"This occasion, the Diamond Jubilee of the Convent of St. Joseph, on which I am privileged to address you this evening, is indeed an auspicious one in the history of the Institute, and I am deeply sensible of the honour that has been done me in allowing me to participate in your rejoicings. I have listened with the greatest interest to the report that has just been read. It has taken us back to those early days when education in Moulmein was yet in its infancy, and has told us, with a severe simplicity of style befitting the austere spirit of the Sisterhood of St. Joseph, how a few first Sisters came to Moulmein, seventy-seven years ago, how they started their work in humble surroundings and in a humble

*H. L. Stevenson, Commissioner, Tennasserim Division, Lower Burma.

manner, and how, through the succeeding years, they built up slowly but surely, keeping bright the lamp of learning and extending their charitable ministrations to the afflicted, until we see to-day the convent, as it now is, with its long roll of pupils and its spacious grounds and buildings, sheltering the orphan and the aged and promoting the cause of education in many ways. It is a fine tale of duty and achievement finely performed. In the report a gracious tribute is paid to the help the Sisters have received from the Government in different ways, and especially in the gift of these buildings and grounds. But halls and grounds are of little account without the spirit that informs them, and it is to their spiritual and vitalizing force that the Sisters have brought to their work, that we would trace this happy celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of this school.

"I should like to dwell, if I may for a moment, on this aspect of the history of the school. For it is well in these days of hectic competition, when a vulgar scramble for self-advancement and riches is everywhere going on around us, and when the very slogans of the time, as they are called, reveal the materialistic manifestations of selfish greed—yes, it is well to turn away our eyes from the

strife and struggle of our days, and let them rest, if only for a while, on the picture of self-sacrificing labour and devotion to duty that the Sisters have offered us for these many years. They have not asked for themselves these triumphs which the majority of men seek after. It has been on a broader and finer ideal that they have set their gaze. In a high conception of duty they have devoted themselves self-denyingly and self-sacrificingly to a generous and single-handed service of their fellowmen. And in transforming their high ideals into action, they have vindicated the claims that duty makes on man, finding their reward in the proud consciousness of achievement and in the knowledge that through them we, too, may still see 'the most ancient heavens fresh and strong.' Such an example of devotion to duty as this, which the Sisters have given us, is one that a country is happy in possessing. In carrying out their work as they have done, the Sisters very nobly have earned the deep gratitude of this town of Moulmein, which has been the scene of their labour and of the whole province of Burma, to which they have given their example.

"It is, therefore, with particular feelings of respect and pleasure that I view to-day those

outward and visible signs of the school's prosperity and welfare: the grounds and buildings, the ever-increasing roll of pupils, the many successes in the examinations, which the report rightly claims as proof of the school's efficiency. I rejoice to see the charitable maintenance of the home for the aged, and no less the general benefactions of the past pupils which reveal the affection that the Institution inspires in its children. These are the happy results of that public-spirited life that the Institution lives, carrying its influence far beyond its walls. Amid much that is lamentable to-day when ancient traditions are said to be crumbling and when the universal cry in the country is that moral authority is decaying, it is comforting to have the sight of this school still rising serenely under the fostering care of the Sisters and the Mother Superior, ever cherishing its high ideals.

"Looking back at the past seventy-seven years I offer the Sisters and Mother Superior my congratulations on their achievement, and looking forward to the future, I confidently utter the hope that the school will continue to prosper long in the land which already owes it so much.

"But there is yet another reason for the

auspiciousness of the occasion. To the Diamond Jubilee of the school is linked the Golden Jubilee of the Mother Superior's arrival in Moulmein and also the Silver Jubilee of her governorship of this Institute. Mother Leonie first came to Moulmein in the year 1875 and for these fifty years, following in the footsteps of her predecessor, she has given devotedly to the people of this country, among whom she has lived, the rich gifts of her heart and mind. For the last twenty-five years she has governed the school wisely and beneficently. Just think what these bare facts mean : at a time of life when we, having laboured each in our allotted sphere, seek the rest that age entitles to, Mother Leonie undertook the task of guiding the destinies and fortunes of this Institution and for the ordinary span of a working-life has performed it with rare success, winning the affection of all who have come under her rule. And I like to think of those thousands of people in Burma who owe so much to her and who turn to her to-day with feelings of gratitude, affection and respect. I hope it will not be counted to me as presumption if I, too, Mother Superior, offer you an expression of my sincere admiration. It is, therefore, with no ordinary pleasure that I now proceed to perform the

duty that the local government has entrusted me with to-day, and present to the Reverend Mother Leonie the decoration of the Gold Medal of the Kaiser-i-Hind, that has been conferred on her by His Majesty the King-Emperor, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Burma, in well-merited recognition of long and devoted service in the Causes of education and humanity."

. . . .

The foregoing appreciation is certainly gratifying, yet the glory of the Burma Mission shines out still more brilliantly in the devotedness of a member of the Institute, a Sister Catherine, who spent upwards of forty years in that field of labour. A brief account of the career of this heroine of charity has been placed on record in the Illustrated Review of the Vatican Missionary Exhibition, May 11th 1925: "Another great apostolate in the mission lands was providentially assigned to the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition in Burma. This country is peopled by divers races, who, for the most part, follow the religion of Buddha.

"This mission founded by Mother Emilie de Vialar in 1847 at the request of Monseigneur

Ceretti, has developed and prospered in a remarkable manner. The Sisters are now established in all the principal towns, Moulmein, Mandalay, Maymyo, Bassein, Rangoon. In these divers centres they devote themselves to the work of the missions. In addition to the work of educating the better classes, they look after small children in their orphanages and old women in their home for the aged. . ."

We cannot close our review of the apostolate of the religious of St. Joseph of the Apparition in Burma without taking special note of Sister Catherine, a heroine of charity belonging to this Sisterhood. In our attempt at a portrayal of this remarkable nun, we cannot do better than reproduce the text of an article which was published in one of the leading newspapers of that province in the month of July 1913. It runs thus :

"In the list of honours conferred by the King-Emperor may be seen the name of Sister Catherine who devoted herself to the poor sufferers in the leper asylum. As the activity and devotedness of the good Sister are not such as may be noticed by the public, a few words on this subject may interest our readers.

"For the past ten years Sister Catherine has been occupied with the care of the little

children of the leper asylum of Kemmendine. In stating that she occupies herself, I do not mean that she does so in a general manner by way of supervision, but that she devotes herself to them in reality by actually working for them, tending them with her own hands. She lives in their midst, sharing their hard life in its saddest and most trying experiences. If one of them is laid up with illness, Sister Catherine tends the poor sufferer with all the affection, care and attention of a mother. No poor creature afflicted with the disease ever causes the least sign of hesitation or unwillingness; on the contrary, no ghastly wound on hand or foot ever excites the slightest repugnance, no matter how advanced or repulsive; the devotedness of Sister Catherine is always equal to the effort, or rather, the needful help is given without any sign of effort.

"If there is washing to be done for these poor creatures, the task is performed by Sister Catherine. How many times have I seen her washing articles of bedding too heavy for the children to handle. Who makes the clothes for these unfortunate little ones? Who mends them when torn (a thing which frequently happens)? Again, it is Sister Catherine.

"She is always ready to help the poor lepers

even when their sad affliction renders them powerless to help themselves; and in spite of the sad sights of the dread disease and her constant intercourse with those afflicted creatures, she is always bright and cheerful. Day after day she may be seen working in the garden, watering the plants, sweeping the paths and doing her utmost to brighten the lives of these poor sufferers. Is there any work more worthy of admiration? Never did I know of anybody who has worked as she has done, and as she means to do, as long as any strength remains to her.

"Sister Catherine is a member of the religious of St. Joseph of the Apparition, who have houses in the principal towns of Burma. This Sister contracted the dread disease in taking care of a leper. After some time, she was declared free from the disease and her cure was attested as miraculous by several doctors. She was at liberty to return to her Congregation; but, after consulting her superiors, with their approval she decided to pass the remainder of her life in the midst of these poor outcasts from society, bearing in mind that, for all their loathsome appearance, they are all still the children of God. Sister Catherine has just been awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal. Has she not well deserved this

mark of esteem on the part of the King-Emperor? Will she not receive later on a greater reward from the King of Heaven? Oh, surely in her case may be expected the fullness of the promise: 'As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me.' "

. . . .

Upper Burma

Nineteen years after their arrival in Moulmein the Sisters opened a house in Mandalay. The work undertaken in this city, both charitable and educational, developed and prospered in much the same way as in Lower Burma. But if we take into account the initial stages or first efforts, we find a great difference, in fact, a very striking contrast.

While peace and order prevailed in the southern portion of the province, the state of affairs in the northern division was just the contrary. Writing to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith in 1867, Bishop Bigandet said, "In the month of May of last year, I paid a visit to Mandalay accompanied by two Sisters and two orphans. The Prince Royal was desirous of opening schools in his capital, so he urgently entreated me to establish a convent there. It was stipulated

PUPILS GARDENING, BASSEIN

FINGERS WERE MADE BEFORE FORKS
DINNER HOUR, CONVENT, BASSEIN

that the necessary funds would be supplied and that the work would be supported by those in authority. At that time everything in connection with this undertaking seemed most favourable. On the 2nd of August of the same year my friend, the prince, was cruelly murdered. The excitement and turmoil which followed proved disastrous to the new mission."

In the convent chronicle of this period there is a record to the effect that, without a single requisite for the journey, the Sisters were ordered to go on board a vessel which would take them to Rangoon. They would have stayed where they were and braved the danger; but Colonel Sladen, the representative of the British government, insisted on their immediate departure. The journey lasted a whole month and in many respects it was most tedious and trying. However, the travellers reached the Moulmein Convent in safety and there they remained until the tumult had subsided.

On starting anew the Sisters were really "needy and poor," as regards material things. Their place of abode was nothing better than a sort of shed; but notwithstanding difficulties and hindrances they remained at their post and continued their work with invincible

constancy. As already indicated the history of their convent is a history of progress and expansion.

In addition to the boarding departments and orphanages they provided a home for poor women. In 1908 they opened a convent in the beautiful hill-station of Maymyo. Quite recently a distinguished visitor took notes on the work of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Burma. A glowing tribute was paid to the Maymyo convent with its fine buildings, picturesque surroundings and bracing climate. The other convent schools of the province likewise attracted attention—just as so many objects of interest that deserve a passing glance, whereas the home for the aged in the Mandalay convent proved quite captivating. Here, questions were asked, anecdotes listened to and notes were taken from personal observation: in a word, here was evidently a work to meditate on and rejoice over. What was the secret of the attraction? Certainly nothing artistic in the group of inmates or in their surroundings. On the contrary, the writer warns the would-be visitor not to expect anything in that line, but rather the contrary, for those old folks do not take kindly to new modes of life.

The following items have been selected from

ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT, RANGOON

MAYMYO CONVENT

the record already referred to: "The task undertaken here is bristling with difficulties. The beautiful truths of our holy religion are not easily grasped by minds encrusted by prejudice and enslaved by the most extraordinary superstitions. The Sister charged with their religious instruction is obliged to repeat, over and over again, the same prayers and the same lessons in Christian doctrine; still she does not lose heart—no, not even when her catechumens prove as faulty in practice as in theory. Here is an instance. 'Ma Peva' tried to hide her guilt after a rather serious transgression, so the catechist said: 'Don't you know that God always sees us and there is no escaping punishment for breaking His laws?' The delinquent looked up to the sky—to ask pardon? Oh no, on the contrary, as the day happened to be cloudy she turned to the Sister with a look of triumph, saying: 'Ah, but God cannot see me to-day, it is too dark.' "

But there is light as well as shade in the picture—in no way daunted, our catechist goes on with the work and eventually her patience and charity are richly rewarded. One poor sufferer bed-ridden for years had been prepared for the Sacraments. After receiving Holy Communion she exclaimed:

"Oh how good God is! Since He came to me, I do not suffer so much. He makes me peaceful and happy. Sister, I hope He will come to me again." On hearing that her wish would be gratified she was overcome with joy, and, ever afterwards, even to the time of her death, she was constantly praising and thanking God.

. . . .

Australia

In the ninth chapter of this work we have seen how in the year 1855, under circumstances the most trying, the Sisters of St. Joseph joined in the pioneer work of the mission in Northern Australia. Reference is also made to the fact that their successors are now reaping an abundant harvest from the seed that these early workers had sown. It is interesting to note that even at the present day the Sisters render important service in a great pioneer movement recently inaugurated, viz., the correspondence classes for children who have no possibility of attending a Catholic School. The following brief record* will give some idea of this novel mode of imparting religious instruction.

*Taken chiefly from a sketch of the Catholic Church in Western Australia, published in Perth, 1926.

HIS GRACE MOST REV. P. J. CLUNE, C.S.S.R., D.D.

In order that the work of education might attain its highest aim by giving the "Art of Arts" the pre-eminent place in all the schools, His Grace, the Most Reverend Dr. Clume, wished Christian Doctrine to be a distinct department of the curriculum and to receive even more attention than the other subjects. There is always a danger, in this era of examination rush, that this important subject should not have the attention it needs bestowed upon it. In order to emphasize the place it should hold, a searching examination was advisable.

For this purpose, His Grace appointed the Rev. J. T. McMahon, Diocesan Inspector. A more suitable leader of the movement could not have been chosen. . . No time was lost in the drawing up of a syllabus suitable for all the schools. . . Since then, the standard of religious knowledge has been raised higher each year, giving good reason to believe that our Catholic children will go forth from our schools well armed with the knowledge of the Faith and fitted to rank themselves among the soldiers of Christ on the battlefield of the world. . .

Having thus given an impetus to religious teaching in the schools, the zealous leader wanted to go farther afield, and give oppor-

tunities of being instructed in their religion to the children in back-blocks who have no possibility of attending a Catholic school.

It had been remarked by a father of a family living in one of these districts, that what the State was doing for the promotion of secular learning in the Bush, namely, giving correspondence lessons, might be used as a means for teaching religion. This suggestion caused the matter to be brought before the minds of the various religious communities at their annual conference. Ever ready to extend the Kingdom of Christ, all the nuns professed their readiness to help on any scheme that could benefit those living in the Bush.

The proposal made was that those who could spare the time would devote it to teaching by correspondence in the places where there are no Catholic schools. Western Australia, on account of its vastness and its deficiency of means of communication, is the worst off of all the Australian States in this respect. Only the larger centres can support a church, and where there is no church there is no Catholic school.

"Religion by Post" was begun in February 1923. Circulars were sent to the priests in the country places, and an advertisement of the scheme appeared in the Catholic weekly

of the Archdiocese of Perth, in order to collect the names and addresses of those who wished to benefit by it. Before long quite a prodigious list of applicants was received. That the first application should come from "Jacob's Well," recalling a memorable instruction given by the Divine Teacher at a place of the same name, was considered a very good omen. As the number for the first year was only 300, three secretaries were considered sufficient for the "Bush Mission." So rapidly, however, did the number of pupils increase that other recruits had to be called for and were promptly supplied from the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition in Fremantle and Albany. At present the number of children being instructed by this method is 1,500.

One of the State officials expressed great astonishment and admiration at the magnitude and efficiency of the schemes declaring it to be "the only private work of its kind in the Commonwealth and the finest thing in the West."

The root principle of the scheme is the personal communication with each child. It is a great joy to children to get letters addressed to themselves and this small attention from a nun enhances its value. The parents

are also gratified by the pleasure given to their children. The following incident is recorded in a recent history of the movement. It is a personal experience of the chief organizer, who says : "The scheme also hopes to reach the parents through the children, and our hopes are being realized. I went to see a family enrolled on our scheme and asked the mother of five children how the instructions were progressing. My answer came in a way I did not expect. Pointing to the door she beckoned me outside and there she unfolded the glad tidings that her husband was growing more interested every day. 'Last Sunday morning he asked Tommy to lend him the copy of the New Testament that Sister had sent him and he read it for an hour. He said to me to-day that we should do something each Sunday morning, when there is no hope of Masses.' The mother's eyes lighted up with joy and welled with tears as she sobbed : 'You know, Father, that he has not said a prayer for years and years.' "

It is needless to remark that the Sisters who take part in this good work find encouragement in such gratifying results. But their zealous efforts extend further than the correspondence classes. The crowning achievement of this great work is what is known as the

TEA PARTY FIRST COMMUNICANTS

MISSION PUPILS, AUSTRALIA

Bushies' Summer School. The object of this assembly is to enable the children to have a *real Christmas*, to learn its true meaning as they never could in the Bush, to continue their religious instructions and to be prepared for the reception of the Sacraments.

The following items from a diary of the Bushies' School are especially illuminating: "To-day the real work of the Summer School began—religious instructions. A large staff of nuns arrived from the various convents to take up the teaching. Father McMahon met the Sisters who so generously volunteered to give up their holidays for this purpose. We noticed that the worried look had disappeared from his face. We sought the reason of his smiles and learned it. 'The children are keen on the classes and the Sisters are delighted with them—they are drinking in the instructions. . . Thank God our efforts are being blessed with the only return we desire.' "

The Bushies assisted at Holy Mass in the open air, kneeling around a grotto of our Lady of Lourdes; they excited great devotion both by their attitude and by the fervent singing of hymns during Mass. In the evening, previous to the recitation of the Rosary, the Sisters divided the Bushies into small groups and gave them an explanation of the

Mysteries of the Rosary. The temporary altar in the crypt was tastefully decorated and the ceremony of Benediction at that hallowed spot was most impressive. The illuminations in the niche made the exquisite statue of our Blessed Lady appear like a heavenly apparition shining out, soft, radiant and beautiful and shedding blessings on the unusual assemblage. On the occasion of the visit to this hallowed shrine, many prayers were offered that none of those who were present would ever be unfaithful to our loved Mother and her Divine Son.

The beautiful and impressive ceremony of Confirmation was a very appropriate ending to the Summer School. The Sisters who instructed the children were present at this function, also numerous visitors. His Grace, Archbishop Clune, described the ceremony as unique in the history of the Cathedral, and one that had given him great consolation. The correspondence classes and the Summer School had, to a large extent, relieved the anxiety he had felt concerning the spiritual welfare of his flock scattered throughout the Bush. The light of their faith had been shed upon homes which could not be illuminated by it in any other way. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by His Grace,

ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT, MANCHESTER

after which all joined in the singing of, "Faith of our Fathers."

. . . .

England

On the 4th of February 1904, two Sisters from Marseilles had an interview with the Right Rev. Dr. Casarteli, Bishop of Salford. After reading the excellent testimonials from various bishops in whose dioceses the Congregation had been established, His Lordship consented to a branch house being opened in the Salford diocese. Some correspondence regarding this foundation had already taken place between Dr. Casarteli and Mgr. Cardot, Bishop of Rangoon, who had seen and judged of the work done by the Sisters in India since 1847. Mgr. Cardot had been desirous of a foundation in England in order to obtain subjects for the British colonies. As the diocese was well supplied with educational establishments, the work offered the Sisters of St. Joseph was nursing, for which there was abundant scope. In November of the same year a house was obtained in Whalley Range, one of the suburbs of Manchester, and early in December it was occupied by a small community. On December 17th the Bishop

paid his first visit and was received in bare rooms containing neither chairs nor tables.

The house was opened to guests early in 1905. It is still called "The Home," the name under which it was known when occupied by Sir William MacClure. Holy Mass was said in the house for the first time by the Bishop on February 21st, one of the largest rooms being arranged as a chapel. Amongst the priests who assisted at the Mass was the Very Rev. James Rowan, rector of the parish, who in many ways assisted the nuns in the hardships and difficulties they experienced during the first few weeks after their arrival. Many sympathetic friends also gathered round the small community, rejoicing with them in the knowledge that the First Guest to dwell in their convent should be the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Since that time the Sisters have devoted themselves to the care of aged and infirm gentlewomen in various stages of illness; in whatever condition they may be, whether suffering mentally or physically, they receive affectionate and compassionate care at the hands of the nuns.

Nor is it invalids alone who are admitted: anyone wishing to lead a quiet and retired life can enjoy warm and comfortable rooms and

in the summer the benefit of a large garden. This does not represent all the good done. The charity of the nuns is boundless: the sick poor are visited and nursed at their homes when application is made at the convent.

To families in better circumstances the community have proved of great use. Instead of being dependent upon the non-Catholic hospital nurse, Catholics can now obtain efficient and careful religious nurses. Many of the Sisters have certificates for hospital training and even decorations, in recognition of their devoted service in the French hospitals. In addition, during the short time they have been nursing in England, the Sisters of St. Joseph have received the highest recommendation from the medical men under whom they have worked.

In 1909, with the charitable help of some friends, the billiard room, hitherto unused, was converted into a very devotional chapel. Hope is entertained that, in the near future, the community may add to their structure. The following appreciation of His Lordship, the Bishop of Salford, was expressed in the form of a preface to a brief sketch of the life of Mother Emilie, published in 1912:

"The fact that I have had the privilege of

welcoming into my diocese the only house of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition which has succeeded in taking root on English soil, perhaps makes it appropriate that I should contribute a few words to this first account in English of the life of the saintly Foundress and the first beginnings of her new world-wide order, which is doing incalculable good for bodies and souls in so many parts of the world, and notably in several spots of the British Empire. I have said that our Manchester house is the first that has taken root on English soil; for exactly fifty years prior to their settlement in Whalley Range, Manchester, the Sisters of St. Joseph had attempted a foundation at Oxford in 1854, but had been obliged to abandon it, owing to the hostility which they met on the part of local bigotry. Times are very different now, thank God, and the Sisters enjoy the esteem and goodwill of all those who know them, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, in this great city. As will be seen from the following pages, the Society of Emilie de Vialar, spreading itself particularly over the East, undertakes all kinds of work, chiefly educational. It adapts itself, however, to local needs, and in this city it is devoted to the nursing of the sick and to affording, on very

moderate terms, a home for elderly and invalid ladies. Those who have had the advantage, and I myself am of the number, of receiving the care of the good Sisters in times of sickness, speak highly of their professional skill and devotion to their patients. Indeed there would be room and work for many such settlements of the Order in these countries; but for the purpose of extension it is necessary that the Sisters should receive many more vocations to strengthen their ranks. It is earnestly hoped that this short sketch of the Foundress and her Congregation may make the latter better known among English-speaking Catholics; and so, under God's grace, be the means of leading some likely souls to the life of the Order.

"Louis Charles,

"Bishop of Salford."

CHAPTER XIII

ECHOES OF THE PAST

"I now finish a life made up of labours and sorrows and ceaseless sacrifices; the pains of all these are now brought to a close, but the merits and fruits of them endure for ever."—*Imitation of the Sacred Heart*, Book III.

WE have seen that, notwithstanding the stress and strain of a very prolonged struggle, Emilie de Vialar succeeded in establishing her Congregation. What was the secret of her success? In his appreciation of the nuns of Ireland, Father Lockington says: "*All* our great Sisterhoods sprang from one pair of hands and from one great heart that fearlessly faced poverty, obliquy and fierce opposition; and finally conquered all difficulties." Is not the saying verified to the letter in the life of the Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition? What then, was the secret of her success? What was the leading principle of all her aims and aspirations, of all her hopes and endeavours? Naught else but an intense love of God and a vivid sense of the love of the Creator for the souls of His

creatures. It is characteristic of divine charity that it ever tends to overflow upon others. In the following extracts from letters and recollections bearing on the life of Mother Emilie, this attractive virtue manifests itself in many ways. Some of these items were furnished by members of her family, others by members of her Congregation.

Writing to a relative she says: "One of our good friends from Rome, now on his way to England, will give you news of me, but for my part, I must await the opportunity of a visit to Gaillac ere I enjoy the pleasure of seeing you again. I trust that I shall then find all as well as I wish them to be. The longer the separation the more frequently and the more fondly do I think of you. . . As for your dear little children, I need hardly say that I shall be most happy to see them. In Rome business matters require a great deal of time, consequently my return to the home land must be put off much longer than I expected."

That these sentiments were warmly reciprocated may be seen from the following: "Your letter, dear Emilie, was received with feelings of the greatest joy and gladness. Accept my most cordial thanks for all your good wishes and tokens of kindly interest in our welfare.

You may rest assured that, on our part, we take the most lively interest in all that concerns you, and most ardently do we wish you the success and prosperity you so rightly deserve."

From a record of a later date we learn that Mother Emilie's two brothers, Augustin and Maximin, who survived her, were visibly helped by the servant of God at the moment of their departure from this world. To one of them she suggested most sublime acts of sorrow for sin, and so deeply was he penetrated with the necessity of giving good example that he requested all the members of his household, including his servants, to be present when he received the last Sacraments. "I have," said he, "very frequently disedified them during my life-time, now at my death I wish to atone for the past." A few minutes ere he passed away he exclaimed, "My Sister is here, she has come to help me. Oh! How beautiful she is! . . ."

Still more interesting are the records of loving sympathy in regard to the poor and the friendless, the despised and forlorn, for such were at all times the objects of her most tender solicitude. In the constitutions of her Institute it was laid down as a rule that a hospice for the poor should be attached to all

her convents. Several Sisters should be appointed to carry on this work. Let them see to the wants of the poor. Let them be mothers to neglected children and, in these works of charity, the Sisters must always bear in mind the words of our Blessed Lord, "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me." Let us now select a few of the numerous instances which show how Mother Emilie herself observed this precept of charity.

Madame Euphemie de Vialar relates that her Aunt Madame de Bermond was an eye witness of the following incident. On a certain occasion she and Mother Emilie were accosted by a miserable-looking woman in the neighbourhood of Gaillac. The poor creature begged an alms from the Sister and, at the same time, showed her stockingless feet all covered with ulcers. The day was bitterly cold. My Aunt Emilie entreated her companion to walk on a little distance as she wished to speak to the poor woman. Madame de Bermond did as she was desired. However, after a little while she stole a backward glance to see if her companion was going to rejoin her. To her great surprise she saw that Mother Emilie was taking off her own stockings to give them to the poor woman. She made

every effort to hide her act of charity and Madame de Bermond very wisely refrained from any reference to the little scene she had witnessed.

Emilie's brother was not so discreet under circumstances somewhat similar. He went to meet her when she travelled from Marseilles to Algiers to prepare her nieces for their first Communion. On discovering that she had passed the whole night on deck, he was greatly astonished. On making inquiries he was told that "the nun, in pity for a poor sick woman and her children, gave up her cabin cheerfully and willingly." Monsieur de Vialar was far from being unkind or uncharitable, but, in his opinion, this was carrying things a little too far, so he rebuked her very severely. The Sister in charge of the kitchen and the household requisites could have told him such remonstrances were of no avail; they themselves had ventured to raise objections on the score of prudence and economy, but finding that their remarks were unheeded, they soon ceased making them. "It is of no use," said they, "to say anything to Reverend Mother; if we object to her excessive almsgivings, we get a smile for our pains and we are quite sure that on the very next opportunity that offers, she will be again led

away by her passion for almsgiving." After some time these Sisters became firmly convinced that Mother Emilie was so desirous of gaining souls to God that she eagerly seized on every chance that came in her way, in order to further this object. In speaking of two poor Negro girls that she had bought from their masters, instructed and prepared for Baptism, she said, "If they are not attractive in appearance their souls are beautiful, for me that suffices." On a certain occasion somebody ventured on a mild rebuke on seeing that Mother Emilie allowed one of these Negro girls to drink out of her own cup. "Oh," said she, "there is nothing wrong in that, on the contrary it is just one of my little ways of winning their souls to God."

In her intercourse with the members of her Institute her sentiments were at all times those of a loving and devoted mother. On a certain occasion a person remarked to her that even charity must have its limits. "The care you bestow upon this Sister is all in vain, she will not recover and you will ruin yourself and your household." In reply she said, "In order to soothe or comfort my Sisters, even in the least degree, I would make any sacrifice." Nothing is lost when there is question of relieving pain or lessening the sufferings of

the sick. . . On another occasion a young postulant was laid up with typhoid fever. The doctor ordered a certain form of nourishment which was not available in the convent at that particular moment. To avoid delay Mother Emilie herself went to an hotel and asked for the nourishment or rather begged for it. Nothing could diminish either her ardent charity or her confidence in God. In reward for her devotedness the Good Master's special help was not wanting in cases of urgent need.

On a certain occasion the Mother House was responsible for the payment of a large amount of money. The coffers were empty when the creditor came to demand immediate payment. He would brook no delay : on the morrow the money must be handed over to him. The Sisters were sad at heart, but not devoid of hope. They prayed very fervently. Early next morning help came from a totally unexpected quarter. Mother Emilie could face her creditor, and at the same time, she was overjoyed at the opportunity of exhorting her Sisters to implicit trust in Providence. It was characteristic of her to turn all her experiences to good account for the spiritual advancement of her co-labourers. . . On reaching the end of a trying sea voyage, she

said, "Now that we are safe in port, the storms that we encountered can be looked on as refreshing breezes," in like manner, when we reach the portals of heaven, shall we not look back at the storms of life? Then will their distant echoes but increase our sense of security; the dangers and humiliations of the past will then be regarded even as privileges and honours. Her own inspiring example was ever the best exhortation, or rather, in all that she urged her Sisters to practise the lesson was exemplified in her own life and conduct.

In regard to sufferings she said, "In religion we do not really suffer, except when we make efforts and take precautions to avoid sufferings." Not by our own power though can we attain to this disposition of unqualified abandonment. In the varied occurrences of life we must recognize the agents of Providence and, trusting in the help that never fails, we must say with confiding affection, "Teach me, O Lord, to submit to Thy will and to renounce my own."

In her letters to her Sisters we see that it was through earnest prayers that Mother Emilie herself had acquired the grace of patient endurance. Writing on this subject she says, "Pray for me that I may obtain the

grace necessary to bear all my trials, not only with an unruffled mind, but with meekness and sweet submission. . ." Two years afterwards she informed the same Sister that she would no longer speak of her own personal trials, since God had enabled her to support them with calm resignation.

It has been well said that "patience is *true courage*—that courage that takes up the burden, lifts it shoulder high, carries it unflinchingly, and goes out to meet life vigorous and free from fear." Her eagerness to impart this spirit to her Sisters is seen in the following: "I consider it a sacred duty to impart to my Sisters the spirit of the Institute, i.e. the spirit which our Divine Lord has deigned to communicate to me. The Sisters are ever to bear in mind that He is their Master and their Model. In order to be successful in their apostolate, they must endeavour to speak, feel and act as Jesus did. They must have a clear idea of what He esteemed and what He condemned, what He abhorred and what He embraced." "By the vows of religion" she writes, "we have devoted our whole life to His service. Let us aim at the union with Him which is a heaven on earth. Let us make up for the poor return made to Him by so many of His creatures; let us

endeavour to make amends for those who wound Him by their negligence and indifference. But, above all things, let us be united amongst ourselves by the bonds of Holy Charity, always remembering His special injunction, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Many new foundations are being made, our work is progressing, but I would rather have only one house of our Congregation than to have many, if the Charity of Christ were not observed therein. It may happen that, while we do all in our power to live peacefully and to give pleasure to others, our good intentions may not be appreciated or even understood; under such circumstances let us still strive to imitate the Good Master; let us bear these disappointments with patience, humility and sweet resignation."

While encouraging the childlike love that warms and dilates the heart, Mother Emilie was ever on the alert to prevent the sensibility which retards progress in the spiritual life. Writing to one of the Sisters she said, "I am very sorry to hear that you feel the separation from me so very keenly. Under these circumstances you must think of the bond of union which unites us. For what have we assembled together? For no other purpose but to promote the glory of God and do good to our

neighbour. Loving each other in God and for God, distance or separation makes no difference whatever. Pray for the fortitude and constancy that will enable you to remain calm and peaceful, no matter what sacrifice is demanded of you."

Very different is the tone of the following lines addressed to a Sister, who was about to begin work, under trying circumstances. "In your moments of weariness, go to our Blessed Lord in the Tabernacle. Ask Him with confidence for the consolation, light, guidance and strength that you so sorely need. Remember that you are His child. Think of His loving invitation to all who are burdened. Speak to Him as to your best friend and ever faithful helper; always remember that without His assistance you can do nothing, but with the aid of His grace there is nothing that you cannot do."

We have said that the example of the Foundress was the best exhortation to her spiritual children. This is strikingly true in regard to her sense of duty. That call was ever sacred, no matter what difficulties came in the way of its fulfilment. The Arabs were in a state of insurrection when the Sisters needed her help in Constantine. She faced the dangers of the journey, saying with the

greatest confidence: "My lot is in the hands of God." At another time a sea voyage was to be made when reports of shipwreck were heard on all sides. The same calm trust enabled her to face the perils of the deep. From the following little incident it will be seen that she desired the same spirit of devotedness from her Sisters. On a certain Sunday morning, Mother Emilie entered a room in a convent in which there was a number of sick persons under the care of a Sister. The nun who should have been on duty at the time was nowhere to be seen. Mother Emilie herself went to look for her and was greatly troubled at not finding her, because the sick were awaiting attendance. At length the Sister came to her post. On seeing her, Mother Emilie asked where she had been and why the sick were left without the care she should have already bestowed upon them. The Sister answered, "I was at Holy Mass, Reverend Mother." In a more severe tone of voice Mother Emilie said, "You should have gone to an earlier Mass. You are to blame for leaving the sick so long unattended."

Closely allied with this strictness in regard to duty's call was a desire that her Sisters should ever enjoy the true liberty of the children of God. Mother Emilie was ever ready

and willing to afford them the necessary leisure if there was question of obliging others or even of giving pleasure pure and simple. This pleasing trait is manifested in the subjoined letter.

On the occasion of a visit to the Mother House, Monseigneur de Mazenod noticed that a member of the community had a great talent for painting. He requested her to do some portraits of priests who were about to depart for the foreign missions. In reply to a letter on this subject Mother Emilie said, "My Lord, I am quite confused over your expressions of thanks. I beg of you to make use of our service as freely as you please. We consider it a privilege to be able to oblige you and we shall always be most happy to render any service." By way of appreciation and gratitude, the Bishop sent the missionaries, each in turn, to celebrate Holy Mass at the Mother House, prior to their departure. Mother Emilie took advantage of this favour to procure relief for the souls of the deceased members of her Sisterhood. At her special request, each of these Masses was offered for the repose of their souls. . .

Almighty God also favoured His servant with special enlightenment as to the future. On a certain occasion while speaking to the

Novices she turned to their mistress, saying: "Take care of these children ; train them up to be true religious, for one day they will be the support and even the pillars of the Congregation." This prediction was realized to the letter, for, of the six postulants thus referred to, all became excellent members of the Institute and the greater number very successfully ruled and directed the principal convents then established.

. . . .

In 1855 a terrible epidemic of cholera broke out in Marseilles. One of the Novices in the Mother House caught the infection and the doctor had no hope of saving her. When he informed Mother Emilie that it was a case of certain death, she replied : "No, doctor, this Sister will not be a victim of the malady, the Blessed Virgin will cure her." The doctor still held his own opinion and was quite convinced that the end was near. The next day he fully expected to hear that the patient had passed away. Great was his surprise on finding that the Sister was out of danger. He repeated over and over again : "It is a real miracle ; it is a real miracle. I shall bear witness to it if necessary."

The Novice who was the object of this

favour was very eager to know what promise had been made to our Lady in her behalf. Shortly after her recovery she was informed as to the special act of thanksgiving for the great favour. This was a visit to the shrine of our Lady of La Garde in company with Mother Emilie herself. Both ascended the long flight of steps on their knees. It is easy to imagine with what fervour they poured forth their souls in prayer to the Mother of Mercy and the Health of the Sick.

. . . .

There is yet another instance recorded in connection with a Sister who had been in almost constant companionship with Mother Emilie for a period of seven years. They had a great deal in common, in fact the high and noble ideals of the Foundress seemed to be reflected in the soul of this Sister, in a word they were kindred spirits. Her services were needed elsewhere and at the moment of departure Mother Emilie addressed her thus: "I see that I do not love you more than God wishes, since I can part with you so willingly for the good of the Congregation." Then, turning to a Sister who was standing by, she said, "You will be her support and comfort at the end of her life." At that time there was

no likelihood that the prediction would be fulfilled, for the Sister thus addressed was older than the one about to depart, and besides she was destined for another convent. All the same, the words of Mother Emilie were literally fulfilled.

In regard to the Congregation, she told her Sisters that she was firmly convinced it would prosper after her death. "Fear not," she said, "the good God will not abandon our Congregation, nor will persecutions destroy it."

As a fitting conclusion to this chapter, we insert the following letter from a Carmelite convent in France, written in February 1870:

"Dear Reverend Mother,

"Some time ago our little Novice asked me to communicate to you an inspiration with which she was favoured while still in your convent. At that time she did not attach any importance to the message and consequently she refrained from making it known to you. Now for some time past the recollection of this favour has become so vivid that she felt impelled to seek counsel from her spiritual director, who made her understand that she was in duty bound to make it known to you.

"We are happy to comply with his com-

mand, for we feel sure that this information will give you great pleasure.

"It concerns your venerable Mother Foundress who has been dead for some years. Mother Emilie asked our little Novice to inform you that, later on, she will work miracles, consequently her remains are to be set apart and carefully preserved. We consider it a sacred duty to give you this information, besides, I feel sure that it will be a source of pleasure to you, and to your whole Congregation, to be thus enlightened in regard to your venerable Mother Foundress. I must now furnish you with other details.

"On giving the information that the sacred remains would work miracles later on, the Novice added that all the records of her life should be collected, for Almighty God wished to glorify her. She lived a hidden life as far as possible, and even committed slight faults in order to be despised, but this illusion was pardoned by Almighty God in view of her good intention. Since it pleases God to exalt the humble of heart, she will be glorified one day, and her Congregation will flourish and prosper. It is already held in high esteem in the Church and most heartily do we desire that for the greater glory of God, all these predictions may be fulfilled.

"Our Reverend Mother offers you her respects and all the members of our Community wish to be remembered in your prayers. As for our little Novice, she still retains very happy memories of her stay in your convent.

"I have the honour to be,

"Yours very devotedly in Jesus Christ,

"Sister M. Teresa of Jesus."

(Carmelite religious.)

The Novice thus referred to had first tried her vocation in the Sisterhood of St Joseph as will be seen from the following sketch :

AN ARABIAN FLOWER

Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified

All Catholics in the Holy Land—and surely all friends of the Holy Land, elsewhere, as well—are delighted that the Sacred Congregation of Rites, confirmed by the Holy Father, has advanced the cause of the beatification of a new saint for Palestine—the Servant of God, Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, whose name outside religion was Mary Baouardi.

For centuries the Holy Places apparently were unable to present a candidate for the

crown of sainthood, so that many have been tempted to think that the spring of sanctity had dried up forever in the country of Jesus.

Now, however, it seems that a holy girl is about to disprove this pessimistic view. Sister Mary's cause has been approved, following the informative process, and Pope Pius XI has confirmed the vote of the Sacred Congregation and signed the decree for its introduction.

Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, one of the most wonderful souls that has ever existed, was born and brought up in the Mussulman-ridden country of Galilee. The little town where she first saw the light of the world was Abellin, located but a few miles from St. John of Acre. The place was a humble little village lost in the mountains of Galilee until this beautiful soul appeared and flourished in its midst.

Her parents were Syrian Catholics and for this reason were hated by the Mussulmans, Jews and Druses. Her father was an upright man, poor, but hardworking and a staunch Catholic. His name was George Baouardi and his occupation was powdermaking, the village's chief industry, by which he made his living.

Mrs. Baouardi was blessed with twelve boys, all of whom died, to her and her husband's

great sorrow. They then went to Bethlehem on a pilgrimage and kneeling before the Grotto of the Nativity they asked for a girl, and if she were given they promised to name her Mary in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Their petition was granted and soon there came a girl whom they named Mary. Two years later a boy, Paul, was born to them, but he never had the happiness of living with his sister. Soon after the last child's arrival, George Baouardi died and his wife followed him to the grave a few days later. Mary was taken by an uncle, her father's brother, and Paul by an aunt on his mother's side.

Mary loved God from her cradle days. Everything regarding the spirit, saints, virtues, penances, etc., interested her and attracted her eager attention. She began practising penances when she was only five years old. Sometimes she would stretch herself in a ditch as though she were going to be buried, and in that position she would lie thinking about death; in this way she acquired a marked contempt for the world.

At that tender age she began to fast every Saturday in honour of the Blessed Virgin; her fasting consisted in not partaking of anything until supper-time. This shows that she was very pious from her early childhood,

and as her fervour never diminished, she reached the summit of perfection in the bloom of youth.

One day an incident took place which opened everyone's eyes and deeply stirred her relatives and friends. It was her custom to pick flowers and place them at the feet of a statue of our Lady; on this occasion the flowers that she had cut and placed on the stand began to take root and sprout. She ran to her uncle to tell him about it. He and all the rest of the family were astonished. The priest was called and he reprimanded Mary in order to keep her humble. The incident made everyone look upon her as something out of the ordinary, believing that God had destined her for great things.

Another occurrence attracted still more the attention of those around her. She had a dream in which she saw a man selling poisoned fish to her uncle. The following morning the man whom she saw in her dream came to their house selling fish. Her uncle wanted to buy some of it, but she fearful because of her dream begged him not to and told him what she had dreamed. He only laughed at her. She continued to plead and cry and finally asked the favour of being allowed to eat the fish herself, in order that by losing her life

the others might be saved. At last the fish was examined and found to be poisoned. The whole village was greatly moved by this incident.

Still another experience made everyone's admiration for her even greater. She was in a room of her home when a snake glided in and made its way to a bowl full of cream. Mary, without suspecting that it could bite her, took hold of it and dipped its head into the cream. Just at the time she was aiding the reptile to suck the cream, some of the members of the family saw her and cried out in alarm ; the rest of the household rushed into the room and the snake fled, while Mary wondered what all the fuss was about.

She often pressed her confessor to allow her to receive her first Holy Communion ; but he always put her off, until finally, when she was eight years old, through an oversight of the priest she was permitted to do so, and her soul was filled with joy.

Soon after this her uncle moved to a small place near the big city of Alexandria, Egypt. While still in Egypt, and at the age of thirteen, Mary was given rich garments, jewels and other personal ornaments. In her innocence, she thought nothing of it. But when a woman began explaining the duties of the new state of

life she was to enter, the scales fell from her eyes and she clearly saw her uncle's plan.

She had been betrothed to her cousin for years without knowing it. Her uncle did not think it necessary to advise her of the fact; it was his will and that was sufficient; she was obliged to submit. Nor was this tyrannical of him, it was merely the custom of his country and race. But Mary wanted to keep her virginity at all costs, and she gave back the garments and jewels and trinkets that had been bestowed upon her and informed her uncle that she would never marry.

That night she knelt for an hour before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, begging her protection. She fell asleep on the floor and in a dream she beheld the Mother of God who told her to follow her inspiration, promising her help. The next morning she arose glad and comforted, and without the least hesitation, cut off her beautiful tresses.

Her uncle hoped to win her with gentleness, but his words failed to produce any effect on her. He then called upon the priest who began to cajole her and to speak to her of the will of God, of obedience to parents or elders, etc. But she did not yield in the least. The Bishop was also summoned that he might try to induce her to obey her uncle's

will. But he, too, failed in his mission. The girl wanted to remain a virgin and no one could oblige her to marry.

Finally her uncle could restrain his temper no longer and he struck her and put her in the kitchen in charge of the negro slave women. They treated her harshly, nor failed to beat and even kick her. The hardest work was always assigned to her and no pity whatever was shown her. To make matters worse, she was denied Absolution and Communion by the priest for disobedience and stubbornness. She did not lose her equanimity, however ; during the three months that the martyrdom lasted she felt truly happy.

But an unexpected incident brought the drama to a close. Remembering her brother, Paul, who lived at Galilee, she wrote him a letter informing him of her condition and asking his help. Her brother at that time was barely twelve years old. She asked a Mussulman who had served her father to do her the favour of taking the letter to Palestine. She slipped away from home to take the letter to him and he asked her to remain for supper with him and his family ; she could find no excuse to make and so she stayed. While at the table the man proposed that she give up the Christian faith and embrace the

Mohammedan religion. She promptly answered: "No, never, I am a child of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, and I hope with God's grace to persevere to the end in my religion which is the only true one."

The Mussulman jumped from his seat and struck her a blow that knocked her to the floor; then drawing his scimitar, he slashed her throat. He wrapped her body in a veil and took her to a secluded spot in the dead of night. This happened on 7th September, 1858.

When she recovered consciousness, she found herself in a grotto with a beautiful lady in a blue habit and veil at her side. After four weeks of tender nursing by the kind lady, Mary regained her health. The lovely nurse held long conversations with the girl and instructed her in things of the spirit, foretelling to the orphan the main features of her future life. At that time Mary did not give much thought to the lady's predictions. The blue-veiled nurse took her to Alexandria to St. Katherine's Church in charge of the Franciscan Fathers and called a confessor for her. After Mary came out from the confessional, the lady was nowhere in sight, and no one could say anything about her, which led her

to believe that it was the Blessed Virgin who had been so kind to her.

After this the girl found work as maid-servant by which she made her living for seven years. She went from Alexandria to Jerusalem, from there to Beyrouth, and from Beyrouth to Marseilles. The reason for her leaving Alexandria was due to the fact that she was in constant fear of being seen by her relatives ; and from Jerusalem and Beyrouth because she was dearly loved by all her mistresses, who lavished affection and kind-ness upon her.

During all the time that she worked as a maidservant, she never kept the money that she earned ; instead she gave it to the poor to whom she even gave her clothing. When she moved from house to house, she had only a small bundle to take with her. God was her providence, and she was never afraid of being in dire want.

Once while journeying with a caravan across the desert, a young man approached her and rode at her side. In a sweet voice, he began to talk to her of spiritual things ; he warned her to be careful with whom she conversed, and encouraged her to guard her purity and make the vow of perpetual chastity. She was delighted to have such a good com-

panion along the way. He also explained her dreams, visions, and other spiritual phenomena, and assured her that he would meet her again at Jerusalem and later in India.

In Jerusalem the young man accompanied her on a visit to the Holy Sepulchre. When they arrived they knelt near Jesus' tomb and made a perpetual vow of chastity. Up until that time she had made the vow every year. Many years later, when she went to India, she met the young man at Mangalore ; however, he was as young as he had been when she first knew him. It was then that she realized that the youth was an angelic spirit. She had suspected it years before, but had not been fully convinced until she met him again in India.

At Beyrouth she became blind, and the doctors could do nothing for her. All hope was given up. She breathed a fervent prayer to the Blessed Virgin and her sight was suddenly restored. Her blindness lasted forty days, after which she went to France with Madame Naggiar, an Arabian who was moving to Marseilles.

Mary Baouardi's feet touched French territory in 1863. As she did not speak French, she divided her time between her household duties and the Church. She had the conso-

lation of finding priests of her rite at Marseilles.

While praying in a Church at Marseilles Mary had her first ecstasy which lasted two hours. Madame Naggiar believed it was a fainting fit and did not pay much attention to her. But a few days later she had a second ecstasy which lasted four hours while praying in St. Nicholas' Church. Her mistress now truly alarmed realized that the fainting spells were something serious. She was taken home and doctors were summoned but they were unable to bring her out of her swoon. When her ecstasy was over, to everyone's surprise she resumed her usual duties. During her ecstasy she had been in Purgatory, in Heaven and in Hell, and the Blessed Virgin had explained many things to her. She was requested by Jesus to fast for a year on bread and water to atone for others' gluttony, and to wear the poorest clothing to expiate for the sins of vanity. She had often fasted on bread and water and knew it would not hurt her; while the second penance was not new to her, as she had been practising it for some time. When she had finished these penances, she fell dangerously ill; the doctors attended her but to no avail. Then she recovered suddenly. At the age of twenty she looked the same as

when she was thirteen ; puny and sickly, but able to do any kind of housework.

She began to have the feeling that the religious life would be the best for her and she wondered which Order would be the most suitable for her. Seeing some Sisters of Charity on the street one day, a desire awoke within her to become one of them, but Madame Naggiar, self-appointed spiritual director of the girl's soul, told her that she could not be received among them. Mary, always simple and humble, did not think for a minute to doubt the truth of her mistress' words.

In Marseilles there was a new Order called "St. Joseph of the Apparition," in whose novitiate were some Arabian Syrian girls ; here Mary would find sisters with whom she could converse and thus banish the distressing question of the language. During the years she lived in France before entering the convent, she learned a little French, but not sufficient to sustain a conversation.

She applied for admittance in the Order and was gladly received. Her entrance took place in May 1866. She was nicknamed Mary Arab. She felt as though she were in paradise in her new surroundings. Due to the fact that she was accustomed to practising all the virtues, especially that of humility, she

led the Novices in the way of perfection. In French, however, she was very backward. During recreation she made everyone laugh at her attempts to speak the language, and for a time her peculiar way of talking was the source of entertainment and merrymaking in the novitiate.

One of her peculiarities was to say thou or thee to everyone, no matter who it was, whether the Mother Prioress, the priests, the Bishop, and even the Patriarch of Jerusalem. It was believed that it was the custom of her race, and, therefore, difficult for her to overcome the habit.

Mary's ecstasies continued in the convent. The Mistress of Novices, Sister Honorine, once found her in the dormitory face down on the floor and her left hand bleeding. When Mary Arab was questioned she explained that a soul in Purgatory requested her prayers for two months, and as a sign that the request was real her hand began to bleed. Another rapture that filled her with sorrow and confusion overcame her in the chapel before the whole community. The Sisters were divided in their opinions regarding the character of the ecstasies; some of them thought they were from God and others believed them to be mere illusions.

But Sister Honorine, the Mother Superior and several other Sisters who had closely examined her virtues were always of the opinion that she was an angelic soul. Sister Honorine called her a "hidden treasure," and compared her to Bernadette Subirous, the Flower of Lourdes.

On 29th March, 1867, the little Arab had the stigmata of our Lord for the first time. After that, every week during Lent, the wounds began to swell on Thursday and reached a climax on Friday morning ; in the evening of that same day they disappeared until the following week. The phenomena ceased after Lent and did not appear until the next Lent.

She had seen near Jerusalem in her pilgrimages groups of lepers with their skin covered with scales and only the stumps of their fingers on their hands. She believed she had contracted the disease and was filled with fear and sorrow. Once she said to the Mistress of Novices : "Mother, do not come so near to me ; you will catch my disease." The Mistress, who was well aware of the nature of her "sickness," replied : "Do not fear, my child, I am not likely to take it."

Her candour and simplicity were so great that there is scarcely another case like hers in the history of the stigmatized souls. The Mother Superior treated her harshly, but her

virtue always shone persistently. About this time she gave a wonderful example of patience: while in the kitchen an outsider bumped into her pushing her against a boiler ; the boiler lid fell on her feet bruising them pitifully and the boiling contents scalded her chest. However, she did not complain ; she remained in the kitchen until another Sister saw that she was shivering with fever and took her to bed. Then the outsider who had jostled her went to her room, accused her of laziness and pulled back the bed-covers scratching the wound on her chest. Mary Arab told this story a long time afterwards when she was pressed by obedience to do so.

Sister Honorine, the Mistress of Novices, and the Mother General, Emilie Julien, were fully aware of the precious treasure the Order had in the humble Syrian postulant ; but many of the other Sisters did not know her value. For this reason, when at the end of the second year of her postulate the community voted upon her, Mary Arab was rejected. A majority of one vote dismissed her from the Congregation. Those who knew the priceless-ness of the gem that was cast away were grief-stricken beyond description, but as the note was legal nothing could be done to undo the wrong.

Mary Arab received the news calmly and

did not have to give much thought to what she should do, as the Mistress of Novices, Sister Veronica, advised her to apply for entrance in the Carmelite Order.

The girl took the Mistress' advice and the Sisters of St. Joseph wrote letters in her behalf. She was received in the Carmel of Pau in the Pyrenees Mountains on 15th June, 1868. On entering the cloister, she humbly kissed the Sisters' hands; they were all struck by her puny and fragile appearance. According to the Carmelite custom, she was given a new name which was selected by a holy priest who lived at Marseilles, Fr. Olivieri; the name was Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, by which she was known to the world thereafter.

. . . .

As regards Sister Mary's prediction, relative to Mother Emilie, it is gratifying to note the following announcement which appeared in the Bulletin of her Congregation, September 1926: "We rejoice to be able to inform our readers and friends that two signal favours, attributed to the power of the servant of God, Emilie de Vialar, have been obtained. One at Saida some months ago, and one in the Mother House, on the day of the identification of her mortal remains."

THE MOTHER HOUSE, "LA CAPELETTE," MARSEILLES

CHAPTER XIV

CAPELETTE

"The least action of a saint lives forever. Their fruits remain and good things continue with their seed."

The Mother House of the Sisters of St. Joseph is situated in a suburb of Marseilles known as Capelette—a word which signifies little chapel. The surroundings of this great central home of the Congregation are very picturesque. A long avenue bordered with stately trees leads up to the immense building. On a balcony in front of the main entrance may be seen a statue of St. Joseph, the patron of the Institute. In one of the gardens stretching out at the back of the convent there is a little shrine called the Novices' Chapel. Here the remains of Mother Emilie have been reinterred after removal from the public cemetery. Further on in the midst of a grove of pine trees is a little house called Bethany. This is set apart for the Sisters who need rest and renewal of strength after hard labour or illness. As a place of repose

it is an ideal spot. Besides the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity, there is much to charm the eye, for Nature's beauties here abound. Chief among the many attractive sights in the distance is the celebrated shrine of our Lady of La Garde with its superb statue of our Heavenly Protectress overlooking the waters of the blue Mediterranean.

There are several novitiates in the Congregation—one in Moulmein, Burma; another in Fremantle, Australia; three in Europe; the most important of which is that of the Mother House in Capelette. In this training school the aspirants to the Sisterhood now number about one hundred, and it is quite evident that Mother Emilie's spirit still survives and that her motto of self-sacrifice and devotedness is still adhered to. Well may it be said of the true servants of God that their fruits remain and that good things continue with their seed. By way of illustration we may cite the following account of a ceremony which took place quite recently—a ceremony which shows how the convent chapel in Marseilles became a place of pilgrimage.

The hallowed stillness of this house of prayer is broken every morning by that most sublime of ceremonies—the celebration of Holy Mass. But on two mornings of the

last week of December 1927 very elaborate preparations were made for the sacred rite, and many were the signs and tokens of special festivity. What was the meaning of it all? Simply this—two newly ordained priests were about to ascend the altar steps to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Who were these priests? A few years previously they were among the wounded in a section of the convent building which had been converted into a temporary hospital during the Great War. Like many of their companions they were impressed by the peace and tranquillity of their surroundings.*

The Holy Scripture says: The Spirit breatheth where It will. We know that at certain times that breath comes with impetuous force as in the cenacle or on the road to Damascus, at other times 'tis wafted to the soul in a gentle whisper during moments of prayer. Has it not also been heard in the turmoil and bustle of the world and even

*(Extracts from letters sent to the Mother House from the scene of Conflict.)

How refreshing is the memory of the calm and peaceful days spent in our temporary hospital. What a contrast to the horrors by which we are now surrounded! How I long to hear once more the sound of the Angelus bell or the tones of the organ in your chapel. What a sad contrast is the murderous boom of the cannon! . . . Never can I forget the calm peaceful atmosphere of Capelette! . . . We have formed a circle of the Living Rosary and all of us have the greatest confidence in our Heavenly Protectress. . . Whether I fall a victim or am spared, I am confident that in life or in death Mary will be a Mother to me. . .

amidst the noise and din of the field of battle. It was in the convent chapel in Marseilles that the mysterious Voice came to these two newly ordained priests, and, though obliged to return to the scene of strife and bloodshed, far from allowing that Voice to be stifled every opportunity was turned to good account. Privations and hardships were endured either by way of atonement for the past or with a view to preparation for the future. In letters to the Chaplain and to the Mother General and her assistants, they showed that their eyes were opened to spiritual things. Their appreciation of religious books was very eloquently expressed, special mention being made of the "Imitation of the Sacred Heart."

With joyful confidence did they look forward to the end of the strife, and when at last the longed-for day had dawned, to them it brought a twofold peace. However, the first days of liberty were spent in eager questionings as to whether the Good Master would deign to make use of them for the extension of His kingdom. . . The call now seemed irresistible and the two erstwhile warriors entered the special seminary for delayed vocations. . . On the great day when the sacred seal of the priesthood made them ambassadors of Christ, their one desire was to celebrate their

REVD. MOTHER CELINA,
General Superior,
1898-1927

first Mass in the chapel wherein they received so many graces. Was it not fitting and appropriate that they should there offer the Holy Sacrifice in gratitude for past favours and in petitions for blessings on their future apostolate? Thus it was that these two newly ordained priests undertook what they themselves were pleased to call a pilgrimage of thanksgiving.

. . . .

Mother Celina

It is easy to imagine the joyous exultation of those who assisted at these first Masses. What a grand recompense for the aged Superior General, Mother Celina! In the words of dedication at the beginning of this sketch, it is said that in the midst of great and varied trials Mother Celina reflected the virtues of the Foundress. This was strikingly manifested at the outbreak of the Great War when so many unexpected burdens were laid upon her shoulders. In the first days of the overpowering shock, pressing needs in other directions caused delays in ambulance work. Now it so happened that when resources in the Mother House were strained to the utmost in tending the wounded, word was brought to

Mother Celina that many poor sufferers were still left uncared for on the streets. A shade of sadness passed over her face, but instead of the expected reply, "We have reached the last limit and can do no more," she said, "Let them be brought in, we cannot leave them to die on the roadside."

Under such circumstances there is always the encouraging promise of the Good Master who deigns to take note of even a cup of cold water given in His name. On the part of His faithful followers there is no doubt as to the fulfilment of the promise; on the other hand, does it not frequently happen that their faith and confidence are often severely tested and even sorely tried? Thus it was with Mother Celina. After attempting what others considered impossible in regard to the victims of the war, whole communities of her own Sisterhood were obliged to leave their convents in Syria and Palestine. After a trying journey they arrived in the Mother House quite unexpectedly. The difficulties of the situation need no comment—difficulties in regard to procuring the necessaries of life—depressing tidings of the crushing force of the invading army—and yet, with calm serenity and tender compassion, Mother Celina consoled and encouraged all around her.

A spiritual writer* has said that our Lord's gifts to His best friends are, to the earthly-minded, the strangest tokens of love. To His blessed Mother, that He loved as none but He could love, He gave the sevenfold thrust of sorrow's sword and tribulation that spanned the days of her life. At the Nativity she was an outcast in her own home-town and then an exile hurrying on to Egypt : through the three and thirty years athwart which lay the darkening shadows of the Cross, on through the days and on through the nights, until she stood, the Woman of Sorrows, beneath the Tree of shame, grief and the foretaste of on-coming grief was ever the gift that the Best of Sons gave the Best of Mothers. . .

But God watches when He sends the Cross. He watches to see that its pressure is neither too crushing nor too prolonged.

To Mother Celina relief came unexpectedly, even as did the trial. The Sisters, thrust out of their convents, were soon called to other spheres of labour. Ambulance hospitals were offered to them in different parts of France, Italy, and Tunis. In these centres, as in the Mother House, the works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, were attended by very gratifying results.

*Francis P. Le Buffe, author of "My Changeless Friend."

Another unusual event, a centenary celebration, took place in the Mother House on the 17th of November, 1928. On this occasion, a member of the Congregation, Sister Teresa Magrath, was the heroine of the day.

Sister Teresa was born in Dublin on the 17th of November 1828 and was the seventh of a family of thirteen. Her people were so remarkable for their appreciation of virtue and religion and so skilled in the heavenly science of music, that they were known as "the artistic Magraths." Sister Teresa had no small share of the family endowments.

A biographical sketch of another Irish lady, Miss Nella Hughes, was published in Dublin quite recently. In the introduction the writer says that Nella left behind her the example of a noble life, a life sacrificed for others, a life that deserves to be written in letters of gold. Her simplicity of heart, her joyous temperament, her refined saintliness of character, have stamped her in the minds of her friends as an ideal daughter of Mother Church, a model of true womanhood. The booklet bears the title, "An Irish soul after God's own heart." One who knows Sister Teresa very intimately has remarked that the foregoing appreciation and title might be very appropriately used for her biography also.

However, in this little sketch we cannot go further than the record which was published shortly after the centenary.

From that record we learn that Sister Teresa spent some of her early years at the work of education in Dublin, and subsequently in Malta where she joined the Sisterhood of St. Joseph of the Apparition.

As a religious, her devotedness, piety, gentleness and cheerfulness were a source of edification to all. So well did she exemplify the precept, "Serve the Lord with gladness," that she brought good cheer and brightness wherever she went. But it was the quiet, unobtrusive gladness which is always serene because always confident. The supernatural character of her obedience and respect for superiors was another noticeable trait in her religious life.

After many years of work as schoolmistress and music teacher in Malta, Sister Teresa retired to the Mother House in Capelette. At home near the altar at all times, she could now enjoy a more intimate and more constant companionship.

On the morning of her centenary, that altar, so long the centre of all her thoughts, of all her joys and all her hopes, was resplendent with lights and flowers. The Vicar Gene-

ral and several priests were present for the celebration of Holy Mass. Accompanied by Mother Celina the venerable centenarian advanced to the place prepared for her near the altar rails. In many respects the ceremony was most touching and impressive. A guard of honour had been formed of the "veterans" of the community, and amongst those selected, the youngest had already completed her eightieth year.

A canticle especially composed for the occasion was sung at the beginning of Mass. After the Elevation the choir thrilled all hearts by their exquisite rendering of "Anima Christi," the music of which was composed by the centenarian herself, when organist in the convent in Malta.

The sermon for the occasion was based on the verse of the psalm: "I thought on the days of old and I bore in mind the eternal years." In glancing at the "days of old" in the life of the venerable centenarian, the preacher referred to the special grace of vocation as the outstanding feature. "My child hearken to My voice." Sister Teresa's companions in religion bore ample testimony to her generosity in responding to that call and at that moment their hearts were dilated with holy joy and gladness—their joy and gladness

was further stimulated by the good tidings that it was his (the preacher's) privilege to announce to them, viz., that the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, had deigned to honour Sister Teresa by a special blessing for the occasion of her centenary celebration. The ceremony in the convent chapel ended with the Magnificat. Postulants, Novices and professed Sisters united their voices in Mary's glorious song of praise, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

. . . .

A Ceremony in Connection with the Cause of Mother Emilie

In accordance with paragraph 1096 of Canon Law, the members of the ecclesiastical tribunal assembled in the Mother House at Capelette on Tuesday 18th May, 1926, for the identification of the remains of Emilie de Vialar. The meeting was held in the large saloon known as the parlour of St. Joseph. In front of the doorway a large crucifix was suspended. Under the crucifix was a table on which a Missal was placed. Two other tables were also prepared, one for the coffin, the other for the examination of the sacred remains.

At half-past eight the session commenced

in presence of Rev. Father Fayilla, S.J., Postulator, and the Abbé Milhavet, vice-Postulator. Doctors, carpenters, masons, and plumbers, whose services were required for the opening of the coffin, were also present. Mother Ida and Sister Solange, having been present at the examination of the remains some time previous, were now called on to attend as witnesses. All were obliged to take an oath on the Holy Gospels that they would fulfil their duty conscientiously. The Mother General, the Sisters, the priests and the members of the tribunal repaired to the little chapel. On the coffin being taken out of the tomb, the Sisters claimed the privilege of carrying it to the parlour. Their request was granted. All were deeply impressed as the little procession wended its way to the parlour of St. Joseph. There the coffin was opened. Immediately the tribunal stated that it contained only the bones of the Servant of God. The Sisters recalled to mind that a like statement had been made in regard to the Curé of Ars and St. Teresa of the Infant Jesus. The Sisters were then allowed to file around the bier; needless to add that the attitude of all betokened deep reverence and filial piety when thus allowed to look on the mortal remains of their venerable Mother.

In accordance with canonical rules all except the members of the tribunal were obliged to retire from the parlour. When the prescribed formalities were completed, the Sisters were allowed to look once more at the sacred remains now placed in a new coffin. A little procession was formed once again and the coffin was born back to the chapel where the reinterment took place.

A report of the ceremonial was sent to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in the first week of June. One who greatly admired the Foundress and her work sent the following appreciation to the Mother House shortly after this ceremony, August 1926: "Many precious gems of thought could be taken from the writings of Mother Emilie de Vialar to form the subject of a eulogy; these I leave to abler pens. The two aspects of the life which make special appeal to me are apparent to the most casual observer. St. Joseph, the Protector of Jesus and Mary, was chosen as the patron and special protector of her Congregation. Are there not many events in the life of the Foundress in which we find a marked similarity to events in the life of the Foster-Father of our Blessed Lord? This is especially noticeable in regard to circumstances under which she most needed his help and protection. Let

us look into the matter a little closely, but without any attempt at interpreting the supernatural.

"It has been remarked that obedience to God's commands made the life of St. Joseph one long difficulty. Almighty God inspired Emilie de Vialar to establish a new Congregation in His Church and did not the labour involved also make *her* life one long difficulty ? Every time we meet St. Joseph in the Scripture we note two things about him. He is always with his family and enduring difficulties just because of that family. He is always protecting that family, thinking of it, providing for it, and planning for it. All his troubles in his work are encountered for Jesus and Mary. Readers of the life of Emilie de Vialar know something of what she endured in providing for her religious family. Then again we must note how St. Joseph overcame all his difficulties. Bethlehem refused him hospitality ; but he managed to find shelter for Mary and the Child Jesus. He out-manœuvred Herod who pursued him to kill the Divine Infant. He won his dangerous way into Egypt and lived down all oppositions there. He returned to Nazareth and brought his family with him, started work again there and carried everything through until his

death. The Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph won her way back to Gaillac and to-day there is a flourishing convent of her Institute in the very house that was the scene of its first beginnings and its crushing calamities.

"The similarity is noticeable even in regard to the number of sorrows and joys. Mother Emilie's first great sorrow was the loss of her own dear Mother in early youth ; consolation came to her shortly afterwards on the occasion of her first Communion ; the tyranny of the housekeeper was compensated for by the sweet message from our Blessed Lord : 'Bear this for My sake.' The harshness and severity of her father became endurable by the manifestation of the Five Wounds. During the trouble in Algeria she was consoled by the Laudatory Decree from Rome. After the danger of shipwreck in the Mediterranean a convent was established in Malta. Her material losses coincided with remarkable progress and expansion of her Congregation and, lastly, did not the agonizing experiences in Toulouse lead to the triumph in Marseilles where the central home of her Sisterhood is still visibly blessed."

. . . .

The Joyousness of the Saints

We are told that one of the essentials for canonization is a note of expansive joy in the life of the person to be canonized, however melancholy may have been the natural temperament. The joyousness of the saints is a fascinating study. It has been remarked that "The worship of praise ever formed a strong link between earth and heaven, that never was there a more joyous company than the saints, since the day when the three children thrown into the fiery furnace walked in the midst of the flames, praising and blessing God." Let us take a brief glance at one or two instances. Did not St. Lawrence, the martyr, not only joyously but jokingly refer to his tortures during the process of slow burning? Then, what is the dominant note in the little saint of our own days, the little Flower who has drawn so many souls to God by the *poem* of her life? Does she not tell us that she will sing always? "The longer and sharper the thorns, the sweeter shall be my song." As for Mother Emilie de Vialar, was it not with the quiet fortitude of a martyr that she endured the hard struggle? When all seemed lost, did not her look of calm serenity, peace and joy impel the Sisters to

express surprise? What was her answer? "If I did not become poor, I could not have established the Congregation." Then, in the Laudate, that little act of thanksgiving which she intended to be a permanent expression of praise and gratitude, are not the Sisters reminded that their Mother forgot the sorrows of the past and remembered only the joys; or if she did recall the sorrows and troubles, it was only to bear in mind that even in the greatest trials there is always some hidden mercy. In trials and difficulties she would have them say: "Thy will be done, to Him whose light likewise grew dim on Calvary. Lift up your hearts when at His feet the sacrifice is lain, then earthly loss is heavenly gain."

APPENDIX

Thoughts and Maxims of Mother Emilie

1. The greatest source of consolation, joy and happiness in this world is to be able to say that in all our actions we have no other end in view but the accomplishment of God's holy will.

2. It is necessary to submit patiently and lovingly to whatever He ordains or permits. I am perfectly certain that His divine help will not fail me in the hour of need. Can He not make use of whatever happens to further His own ends and to procure our greater good?

3. To my greetings for the new year let me add this: The number of crosses is a matter of small moment, so long as they are not the outcome of negligence or infidelity on our part.

4. Our Blessed Lord treats us as His true spouses by making us follow the way that He Himself has traced for us, viz., that of tribulations and combats.

5. I have had many severe trials, but God's help has never been wanting.

6. When accepted as a pledge of His love, the Cross becomes light and endurable. The three essentials of the religious life are, humility, a spirit of detachment from all things temporal, and a love of the Cross. The last-mentioned is certainly difficult in practice ; but it can be attained if we love God very dearly, very earnestly and very ardently.

7. In the religious life we do not really suffer, except when we take precautions and make efforts to avoid sufferings.

8. (To Sisters who were setting out for a far distant mission) :

"Go my dear children and may the blessing of the Good Master accompany you. Do the greatest amount of good you possibly can, according to the opportunities afforded you. Rest assured that His guidance, help and protection will not fail you."

9. Let us pray much for each other ; let us ask for the spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice which draws down special blessings from heaven. There are so many ways in which we can work for God's glory. May He give us the grace to do as much as possible, while yet there is time.

10. Whenever we find slackness, or relaxation in the religious life, the failure is almost always traceable to self-seeking. The longer I live the more clearly do I see both in regard to myself and others, that one must be constantly on one's guard against this pernicious foe. It is only when we are firmly resolved to renounce self in all things (and this is a duty that our calling demands of us)—'tis only *then* we become aware of the many cunning devices of this *obstacle to our perfection*.

11. On seeing myself deprived of all things, I said: 'Tis only now that I feel that I am a religious.

12. (To a Sister who had been appointed Superior):

"Since you have already made some progress in the virtue of humility, you will be perfectly indifferent as to whether you have to exercise authority or submit to it—indifferent, except that you prefer the latter as being the easier road by which to make your way to heaven."

13. (To a Sister who was restored to health quite unexpectedly):

"While rejoicing over your recovery, let me remind you that it was not only for your own sake that it has pleased our Divine Lord to restore you to health through the

intercession of His Holy Mother. It was likewise for the benefit of the children confided to your care. You must now make good use of your renewal of strength in order to make our dear Lord known and loved. Inspire your pupils with an ardent love for Him, by so doing you will undoubtedly establish His reign in their hearts."

14. I cannot say how much it grieves me to notice any failing in charity or tender compassion on the part of our Sisters; on the other hand it gives me the greatest joy and gladness to see them animated with this Christ-like virtue.

15. I would prefer to have but one house of our Congregation than to have a great number, if mutual charity were wanting therein.

16. It is in God that we find our greatest consolation, and I have always remarked that His divine grace is granted us in the greatest abundance during our retreats.

17. (Reminiscences of first companions) :

While explaining or commenting on our holy rules, our Mother Foundress often raised her eyes to heaven, as if for help and enlightenment. When about to be received as a Novice she herself took charge of us. I love to recall the good advice and the exhorta-

tions addressed to us during that retreat—the happiest of my life. . . Our Reverend Mother laid special stress on interior mortification, silence or the spirit of recollection : religious simplicity was also a favourite theme—that simplicity which while comprising all the virtues Christian and religious—Faith, Charity Prudence, Humility, etc.—at the same time safeguards these virtues from all desire for notice, or approval.

18. (To a Sister on the Mission) :

"If you have no other recompense but my poor sentiments of appreciation you have but a poor reward. Just as, in the religious life, true happiness is attainable only by working for no other end but the glory of God and the good of souls, in like manner the true reward is received by meriting that grandest of greetings, that jubilant Welcome Home. 'Well done thou good and faithful servant—enter into the joy of the Lord.' "

Graces and Favours Attributed to the Intercession of Mother Emilie

A priest was afflicted with bad attacks of epilepsy which occurred even several times a day. He prayed to our Venerable Foundress and applied as a relic a piece of cloth from a garment worn by her. His faith and confidence were rewarded by a perfect cure.

This took place in September 1896.

. . . .

Our Sisters are in charge of a hospital in Nazareth. In 1898, one of their patients, a young woman, was at the point of death. When seemingly about to breathe her last sigh, the Sisters thought of praying for her recovery. Full of faith and confidence, they besought Almighty God to glorify His servant, Emilie de Vialar, by granting, through her intercession, the cure of this poor woman. Hardly had they finished their prayer when a change for the better was noticeable, and in the course of a few days the patient was restored to perfect health.

. . . .

Letter of Rev. Father L.G. X. . . 23rd October 1922.

"To the General Superior.

"Dear Reverend Mother,

"Although my recovery may not be looked on as a great miracle in the strict sense of the word, it is, nevertheless, a great and signal favour, granted by Almighty God through the intercession of your venerable Foundress. I consider it my duty to give some details of my dreadful malady and its cure.

"After travelling to Paris in the month of May of last year, an infirmity with which I had been afflicted for some time became greatly aggravated. I submitted to an operation at the hands of an eminent surgeon in the hospital of St. Joseph, but instead of improvement my condition then became much worse. The malady so affected my head that I became a prey to gloom and sadness. It seemed to me that a sentence of damnation was actually pronounced upon me, and that my suffering in eternal torments should be greater than those of any other lost soul. I cannot tell you what I suffered : for about three months I had hardly any sleep except through the use of narcotics, and in these brief periods I was tormented with the most awful dreams. I could no longer offer the Holy Sacrifice of

the Mass nor receive Holy Communion. I continued to pray and to recite the Rosary, but almost without hope. However, many prayers had been offered in my behalf.

"When Sister C. proposed a novena to your Foundress to obtain my cure, I told her that it was utterly useless to think of such a thing. In fact, I expressed my disapproval in these words: 'I regret that you have had such an idea, because you cannot succeed. My cure is not only difficult, but impossible, utterly impossible; consequently, your novena will be a failure—that will not redound to the glory of your Foundress, far from it. Nevertheless, if you are determined to make the novena I will consent to join you, but only with the hope that your venerable Mother will obtain for me the grace of a happy death.'

"Well, the prayers were said and I soon found great relief from my terrible sufferings, in fact in a short time I was completely cured. I now understand the foolishness of my dark and dismal forebodings. Great is my gratitude to Almighty God for having rescued me from the abyss of despair into which I had been plunged. My recovery has been a cause of astonishment to several persons.

"For many years I have had great admiration and respectful regard for the Sisters of

St. Joseph of the Apparition. These feelings have now been strengthened and, needless to add, I shall always have a special devotion to your venerable Mother Foundress."

. . . .

Our Sisters have a home for the aged in the diocese of Florence. Among the inmates were two old men, who for many, many years had given up the practice of their religion. One of them not only boasted of his unbelief, but evinced the most implacable hatred in regard to Christianity or anything appertaining thereto. The other was utterly indifferent. Neither of them had approached the Sacraments from the days of their early youth. The Sisters recommended them to the mercy of God, praying that He might deign to glorify His servant, Mother Emilie, by granting them the grace of conversion. Their prayers were heard; these poor wanderers came back to the fold, approached the Sacraments, abjured their errors and made solemn profession of their faith. Since that time (October and November 1921) they have given every reason to hope that they will persevere to the end.

This favour was attested by the Chaplain

of the Institute, the Director and two of the Sisters of that convent.

. . . .

The nephew of one of our Sisters in Malta had been ill for nearly two years and a half. All efforts at curing him were utterly fruitless.

The Sisters advised the child's mother to have recourse to our Foundress. Full of faith and confidence she acted on their suggestion, and began a novena to obtain the favour she had so much at heart. On the very first day, Leno (the little boy) began to feel better. After five days the fever left him; but it returned again on the eve of the day on which a rosary, which had been placed on Mother Emilie's tomb, had been sent to him. With renewed faith and confidence the mother placed this rosary around the neck of the little sufferer. Two days afterwards he was much better and at the end of the novena he was completely cured. (This took place in 1922.)

. . . .

A Sister in one of our convents was declared consumptive in April 1919. The following year, owing to an attack of influenza, she became much worse; her temperature rose so high at times as to cause both delirium and

bad attacks of the heart. In November 1920 all hopes of recovery were abandoned. The Superior then proposed to the community to make an appeal to the intercession of our Mother Foundress; they agreed to do so, but without informing the Sister. A slight improvement was noticed even from the commencement of their novena, and on the day on which it was to end, the Superior asked the Sisters to offer Holy Communion for the favour they so ardently desired. The sick Sister had a good night. At five in the morning when the bell was ringing for the community, she heard a voice as it were, saying, "You are cured, get up and go to the chapel." Thinking that perhaps the infirmarian was speaking to her, she called out to enquire. The infirmarian, on the other hand, thought that the invalid was becoming delirious again, so she told her to remain in bed and on no account to make any attempt at getting up until actually told to do so. The Sister promised to obey. The infirmarian then joined the other Sisters in the Chapel.

About six o'clock, the invalid seemed to be under the influence of some invincible power which forced her to get out of bed, and once again she seemed to hear a voice telling her to get up; she did get out of her bed, but fearing

to disobey the infirmarian she went back again. This happened a second time. However, the third time, trembling with emotion, she dressed and got out of her room—the first time for two and a half months.

After the meditation the invalid sister met the Superior in the corridor and, rushing towards her, she embraced her affectionately. What astonishment! What joy on both sides! The Superior wished to send her back to her room, but she begged to be allowed to assist at Mass. "Very well," replied the Superior, "you may remain."

That day she took her meals with the community. The following morning the Te Deum was sung in the convent chapel, and full of joy and gratitude the Sister herself joined in this hymn of praise and thanksgiving.

. . . .

"Paris,

"April, 1920.

"Dear Reverend Mother,

"As I have been many, many years in the service of Madame de Vialar, I often heard about your Mother Foundress, but it never occurred to me to ask any favours from God through her intercession.

"It was only in the year 1914 that I asked her help and I considered it a duty to tell you about my wonderful experience.

"During the time of the year when strawberries were in season, I served this fruit for the family repast, but when about to take my own dinner I experienced a sort of disinclination to have any of this fruit. However, I cannot say whether it was greediness or only a natural desire for the refreshing fruit, but, at any rate, I allowed myself to be tempted to take it.

"Hardly had I gone to bed when I got into a state of high fever; my tongue became inflamed and stiff as a piece of wood. A horrible feeling of suffocation added to my sufferings. All of a sudden I thought of calling on Mother Emilie to help me, though up to that moment I never thought of her in any of my troubles or difficulties. In my pain and anguish I then spoke to her as a child speaks to a loving mother. 'Through your merits, through your great love of God, may He deign to cure me.'

"Oh, surely this good Mother Emilie heard my cries of distress, for after a few minutes of still greater suffering I was entirely relieved from the terrible sensation! She really did plead for me at the throne of grace. After a

little while I slept peacefully and, were it not for a sort of drowsiness on awaking, there was no trace or sign of my terrible experience.

"My Mistress is of opinion that the strawberries had been touched by a poisonous insect. At all events, whatever may have been the cause of my malady, I entertain feelings of the deepest gratitude towards your good Mother Foundress."

. . . .

"Saint Affrique,
"31st January 1923.

"Dear Reverend Mother,

"One of my little girls was taken from us after an illness of two or three days. Her younger sister was deeply attached to her and the sudden and unexpected death affected her to such an extent that she became very ill. The worst phase of her trouble was a complete loss of sleep. For a period of seven months she lay awake night after night and none of the remedies prescribed seemed to have any effect on her or do her any good.

"Sister L. told me about the favours that had been obtained through prayers to your Foundress, and advised me to have recourse to her.

"I did so and that with a sure hope of being heard. Now I am very happy to tell you that my petition has been granted. My little girl was restored to health and she now enjoys good, refreshing sleep throughout the night.

"With a view to paying the debt of gratitude I owe for this favour, I shall try to spread devotion to your good Foundress, and thus hope to hasten her beatification which, I trust, will soon take place. The Institute she has founded does so much good that God will surely deign to glorify her who has sacrificed all for His sake."

. . . .

The Congregation of Rites, in its sitting of the 13th November, 1928, has sanctioned the validity of the apostolic and ordinary processes relating to the cause of beatification and canonization of the Foundress of the Institute of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE STANHOPE PRESS, LTD.
ROCHESTER : KENT

Date Due

HUNTTING—1320

MARYGROVE COLLEGE LIBRARY
The Life of Emilie de Vialar, fo
270.921 V653S
3 1927 00114716 1

270.921
V653S

MARYGROVE